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## PRINCIPLES

OF

## INTERPRETATION

OF THE

# OLD TESTAMENT;

TRANSLATED FROM THE

INSTITUTIO INTERPRETIS VETERIS TESTAMENTI

O F

## JOHN HENRY PAREAU,

PROFESSOR OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF UTRECHT.

BY

# PATRICK FORBES, D.D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF OLD MACHAR, AND PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY, &c. KING'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

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# CONTENTS.

	·		Page
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE			ix
AUTHOR'S PREFACE			XV

## INTRODUCTION.

§ 1.	Explanation of the Object of this Undertaking .	]
§ 2.	A short History of the Interpretation of the Old	
	Testament	2
§ 3.	The difficulty of Interpreting the Old Testament	18
§ 4.	The principal reasons which, in our times particu-	
	larly, recommend the Interpretation of the Old	
	Testament	26
§ 5.	The Extent and Plan of the proposed Work .	21

PART FIRST.

Page

OF THOSE ACQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS WHICH WILL RENDER ONE A GOOD INTERPRE-TER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE PRESENT AGE. SECTION FIRST. OF THOSE STUDIES INSEPARABLY CONNECTED WITH THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTA-MENT. CHAPTER FIRST. Of the Language in which the Books of the Old Testament were written 25 CHAPTER SECOND. Of the Cognate Dialects of the Hebrew Language . . 41 CHAPTER THIRD. Of the History of the Hebrew Text, and the sources of its Criticism in general . . . . . 51 CHAPTER FOURTH. Of the ancient Interpreters . . . . . 75 CHAPTER FIFTH. Of the Authenticity, Integrity, and Historical Faith of 101 the Books of the Old Testament

Page

170

. 119

CHAPTER SIXTH.

SECTION SECOND.

Of the degree of attention due to the extraordinary interposition of God in regard to that Religion, which is contained in the Books of the Old Testament

OF THE PRINCIPAL ENDOWMENTS OF MIND, AND
VIRTUES OF THE SOUL, TO BE DESIRED AND
CULTIVATED IN AN ACCOMPLISHED INTERPRETER
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.
CHAPTER FIRST.
Of the endowments of Mind 143
CHAPTER SECOND.
Of the Principal Virtues of the Mind, which an Interpreter of the Old Testament ought to possess, particularly in this age
SECTION THIRD.
OF THOSE SUBSIDIARY STDUIES WHICH ARE AN OR-
NAMENT AND AID TO AN ACCOMPLISHED INTER-
PRETER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Of the Study of Ancient Literature and Philosophy

CHAPTER SECOND.

l'age

Of some other Branches of Knowledge, the Study of which is useful for the Interpretation of the Old Tes-
tament
PART SECOND.
OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTA-
MENT IN GENERAL.
SECTION FIRST.
Of the true manner of Interpreting the Old Testament 191
SECTION SECOND.
Of the Understanding and Explanation of Words . 216
SECTION THIRD.
Of the Understanding and Explanation of Things . 269

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE following Introduction to the right mode of understanding and expounding the Books of the Old Testament, seems to the Translator well adapted for the use of those entering on the study of that sacred volume, from its containing a succinct account of the principles of the knowledge and acquirements which are requisite and indispensable to the successful pursuit of that study, and from being written in a plain style, without a superfluity of technical terms, or any parade of learning. It may also serve as a text-book, to which the student can refer his future accessions of knowledge, as its arrangement is clear and comprehensive; and, the advantage of having such a text-book or syllabus, will be readily acknowledged by those, who are aware of the extent and difficulty of the subject here treated. The Translator is of opinion too, that, on the

whole, the work will, by all candid judges, be acknowledged to be the production of a man of good principles and good sense, as well as of sound and competent learning. And, it was the conviction on the Translator's mind, that such a work was wanting to the theological literature of this country, and that the present one was well calculated to supply this desideratum, and would be very useful to the young Theologian, which induced him to undertake the irksome task of translation. He entertained hopes also, that such a work might have the effect of exciting an earnest attention to the study of the original of the Old Testament; without a deep acquaintance with which no one can ever be a sound Theologian, or become even tolerably acquainted with the language and sense of the New Testament, that sacred depositary of all the really valuable hopes of man. And were it in any degree to contribute to this much to be desired result, it would give him unspeakable pleasure to think that, in the humblest way, he had been assisting in the promotion of it.

No one will suppose that the Translator holds himself responsible for the opinions which the author of the work entertains and promulgates. This caution, however, is much less necessary with regard to these volumes, than to many of the Continental productions. For the author is a decided and uncompromising enemy to the

Rationalist system, of which, in another production, he has given a confutation, and an account of its origin and progress. It was, however, the intention of the Translator, at one time, to have appended notes, corrective of some views and statements, which to him appeared erroneous, and also containing extracts from, and references to other books, in which the various subjects were more fully illustrated. From this, however, he was deterred by various considerations. The chief of them was, the extent to which such notes would have probably gone, and the consequent weariness and annoyance which every one must have experienced in reading a book loaded with notes and references, and what would frequently, perhaps, have appeared hypercriticisms, particularly to beginners in the study. The conflicting views, too, of the Author and Translator, would often have had the effect, perhaps, of confusing instead of enlightening the young student, for whom this work is principally intended. Such an addition would likewise have increased very considerably the price of this translation, which can, in its present state, be sold for little more than half the price which the original costs; and, consequently, would have prevented it from being so generally diffused

a "Disputatio de Mystica Sacri Codicis interpretatione." Traj. ad Rhen. 1824.

and studied, as the merits of the work itself seem to the Translator to deserve.

The rule by which the Translator has been guided, in making this translation, is, that he should not only give the sense of the Author, without either addition or diminution, but, as far as the idiom of the two languages would permit, the dress or form in which the Author has thought proper to put it. Merely giving the sense of the Author in the Translator's own lauguage would have been a much easier task, and is a method frequently adopted on similar occasions, although in fairness it cannot be denominated translation. For a clear view of what was in an author's mind, and the exact shade of meaning which he intended to convey, depends much on the form of his expressions and language, and, therefore, every real translation must exhibit this form as correctly as possible. Modes of thinking also appear not a little from modes of expression; and every one, who deems it worth while to read a work, will be desirous of having a full acquaintance with the mind of the author, and his exact views, rather than his general sense, conveyed through the very different channel of the language of one who performs the humble office of his interpreter. This mode of translation, however, while attended with the great advantage of giving a more correct representation of the author's mind, and of

his manner of viewing subjects, is attended with some disadvantages. For it is almost impossible, when translating in this manner, from a language so differing in form and idiom from ours as the Latin does, to free the sentences at all times from awkwardness, or to make the style quite easy and flowing. The present translator does not by any means pretend to have accomplished this: neither indeed, in order to attain this object, has he designedly violated the rule of translating which he proposed to himself. This is the only excuse which he pretends to offer for any clumsy or awkward passages or expressions which may present themselves in the book. He has, however, endeavoured to render the whole perspicuous and intelligible as far as he was able, with the exception of a few passages which were vague and indefinite in the original, and which he has left as he found them. cases, when not sure whether he was translating correctly, he has quoted the original expressions.



## PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR.

WHEN teaching the Oriental languages in the University of Harderwick, I formed the opinion that I would consult the advantage of the young men who were studying theology there, if I should briefly explain to them what things seemed to me principally to be attended to and accomplished by the interpreter of the Old Testament, particularly in reference to the present age. After I was transferred to the University of Utrecht, I occasionally gave lectures on this subject, before attending lectures on sacred hermeneutics was imposed as a duty on the students of theology. But though always decidedly of opinion that I ought to complete the whole elementary instruction in the science in one academical course, the disagreeable occurrence frequently happened to me, that I was not able to treat certain parts so fully as I wished, nor to give that time to the highly useful exercise of examination which I desired. I had therefore

long ago determined to publish a work on the principles of the interpretation of the Old Testament, such as I could follow in my academical lectures, and which would answer my object sufficiently of serving the purposes of the students, and at the same time might be of some advantage to others.

Applying myself to this work then, with these two objects in view, I laid down this plan to myself, that, in an undertaking of the most extensive nature, I should enter into some subjects more fully, and touch on others more slightly, and in many make such selections as their nature seemed to require or allow, adding at the same time, in the third part of the work, what I thought principally deserving of the attention of an interpreter regarding each of the Books of the Old Testament, arranged in their proper classes.—I have judged it proper not to make any distinct reference to writers of modern times, except where it could scarcely be avoided. I know, indeed, that it is the custom of the present day with many to refer to a great many other writers. But, after due consideration, so far was I from thinking that I ought to imitate this custom, that even in my private lectures I deem it sufficient to refer to those writers whom it is indispensably necessary to mention. Having therefore, in the end of § 2. of the introduction, mentioned the principal authors connected with my undertaking, I did not choose to load my book farther with a troublesome collection, easily indeed made, of more references. Lastly, I have thought it worth while to add indexes; in which my only object was, to render the consultation of the book more easy.

Utrecht, February 22, 1822.



## PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

OF THE

# OLD TESTAMENT.

### INTRODUCTION.

§ 1.

Explanation of the Object of this Undertaking.

- 1. Since, in every science, whether treated of briefly or more copiously, it ought, above all things, to be attended to, that the mode in which it is taught be accommodated to the state and circumstances of the times; I have, therefore, considered this necessary to be kept in mind, when attempting to deliver the principles on which the Old Testament is to be interpreted.
- 2. I consider him to be a proper interpreter of the books of the Old Testament, who, after full instruction and preparation, endeavours, to the utmost of his power, to understand their true meaning himself, and to explain them to others in a manner adapted to the times in which he lives.
- 3. Since these books are, of all others, the most ancient, no one can be a good interpreter of them, unless he be acquainted with the art of criticising them;

and, therefore, I have not left this branch of the subject untreated of.

- 4. In interpreting the sacred books, certain rules must be observed. The science explaining these is called Sacred Hermeneutics; which, when ranked as a part of theology, is called Exegetical Theology. From this is distinguished what is called Exegesis, or the act itself of interpreting the sacred volume.
- 5. These rules of interpretation ought to flow clearly from the very nature of the subject, and should not be liable to vary or change with the change of times and circumstances. Should, however, the principles of sacred criticism not be prudently adapted to the genius of different ages, they would, in a great degree, be useless, and not attended with the desired advantages.
- 6. Although the interpretation of the books of the Old and New Testament have much in common, it would, however, be inconvenient to conjoin the rules for interpreting them, on account of the very considerable diversity which exists both in the interpretation and criticism peculiar to each.

§ 2.

## A Short History of the Interpretation of the Old Testament.

1. The interpretation of the books of the Old Testament in its highest antiquity<sup>a</sup> has not been the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> The words in the original are, "Librorum V. T. in summa sua antiquitate interpretatio non eadem omni tempore fuit."—Tr.

same in every age: and its history, both among the Jews and Christians, is worthy of attention.

- 2. From the beginning of the primitive form of the Hebrew state down to its destruction, these books required little interpretation. The language in which they were written was, during all this space of time, vernacular to the Israelites, and underwent only very slight changes. If, then, any explanation was required, it was only in reference to the duties prescribed by the Mosaie law.
- 3. The first interpreters of the sacred books may therefore be said to have been the Levites and the Prophets. For they, by the very Mosaie constitution, were the authorised directors and administrators of the external worship of God, and the interpreters and teachers of the Divine laws, both sacred and civil, to the people, Deut. xxxiii. 10. They promoted the internal worship, and the sincere veneration of the one God, and prompt obedience to his laws; and they inculcated the love of true piety and virtue agreeably to the object of the Mosaic constitution on their countrymen. From the time of Samuel downwards, therefore, they had schools in which the youth were formed to those noble sentiments, and in which, with the same view, the Divine writings were read and explained.
- 4. Although, previous to their exile to Babylon, the Israelites had among them persons who, from the nature of their office, applied themselves to the understanding of the Mosaic books, and to explaining them in the manner suited to the wants of the time, yet, by the greater part of the community, the study

of these and the other sacred books, was in general little relished. For the Israelites universally shewed a great propensity to the worship of idols and false gods at all times; until, by the condign punishment of their perverseness, in the destruction of their state and subsequent exile, they were brought to a better mind.

- 5. When the Jews, after their return home, began to devote themselves with much greater care than ever they had done before to their religion, and, in consequence, to the study of those books in which it was contained; the more distant they were from that age in which particularly the more ancient of these books were composed, and the more the language of their fathers had become depraved among them, so much the more every day did the necessity of having them explained to them become greater. But, growing more and more adverse to all foreign religions, they, by degrees, fell into the basest superstition, and thus became attached to those modes of interpretation, which are particularly pleasing to men who are superstitious, devoted to trifles, and narrow minded.
- 6. Before the time of our Saviour there had, in consequence, long prevailed a trifling and subtile mode of explaining the Old Testament, which, servilely adhering to the words, altogether departed from the true meaning of the text,—a mode which was followed by most of the doctors of the Pharisaical sect, particularly in interpreting the laws of Moses contrary to their spirit, and the Divine intention in enacting them.

- 7. But, at the same time, there were not a few who followed a quite opposite plan, and paid no attention to the proper and common meaning of the words, but superinduced on the Scriptures a remote and figurative or allegorical signification, with the view of extracting from them the tenets of a foreign philosophy. The most indefatigable, in this absurd manner of interpretation, was Philo-Judæus, who was so carried away by his attachment to the Platonic philosophy, as to exhibit it veiled and wrapped up in the doctrines, precepts, and even in the historical details of his religion.
- 8. From the time of Alexander the Great, there evidently prevailed among the Jews who lived in Egypt, a most silly mode of interpretation, deriving its origin from the allegorical method of the secret philosophy of the Egyptians, which, in the course of time, propagated itself more extensively. Out of the words and letters themselves, and their order and transposition, they extracted a hidden sense, and doctrines full of mystery: and this manner of interpretation, which was thought to recommend the traditions received from their ancestors by the additional authority of sanctity and of divine origin, came at last to be termed Cabalistical from the word 727, which signifies "to receive."
- 9. When, however, from the tenth century after Christ, the study of Hebrew grammar came to be cultivated among the Jews, there were some who attempted to explain either the whole of the Old Testament, or some of its parts, in the grammatical manner, of whom

the principal were Aben Esra, Salomo Jarchi, Moses Maimonides, David Kimchi, and Isaac Abarbanel.

- 10. On the criticism also of their sacred writings, some Jews bestowed no little labour. The study of some sort of criticism seems even to have existed among them previous to the third century of our era. It was confined, however, almost wholly to things of very trifling importance, agreeably to the turn of mind of their nation, and was employed about mere minutiæ, such as the accurate computation of the number of words in each of the books of the sacred volume; nay, it was even partly conjoined with their cabalistic pursuits, as certain astonishing mysteries were endeavoured to be discovered in the uncommon mode of writing some letters, or in an unusual manner of punctuation.
- 11. Some interpretations, or versions as we call them, were made by the Jews; of which some were into Greek, for the use of those of their countrymen who could read Greek more easily than Hebrew, or who were quite ignorant of the Hebrew language; others were into Chaldee, intended for the use of those who had been accustomed to the Chaldee language, and with whom the language of their ancestors had gone into disuse. Of these versions some are quite full of allegorical and cabalistical fables.
- 12. Jesus Christ, the founder of our religion, quite disapproved of the perverted mode of interpretation adopted by the Jews of his time, as appears from Matt. xv. 1—14: but, however, both he and his Apostles, in quoting the sacred Scriptures, and mak-

ing use of them for their own purposes, sometimes accommodated themselves to the received manner of the time; and Paul, in particular, with a prudence deserving much praise, occasionally adopted the allegorical mode.

13. By far the greater part of the succeeding Christian teachers, up to the age of Constantine the Great, were quite devoted to this allegorical mode of interpretation, and employed it almost solely in their disputations. The most celebrated during this period of time were Ephraim Syrus among the Orientals, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen among the Greeks, and Jerome among the Latins. The Greek doctors were indeed more particularly delighted with the allegorical method; to which both Clemens, although the most learned of the Fathers as they are called, and even Origen himself, how much soever in other respects he contributed to assist in the right interpretation of the Scriptures by those stupendous critical labours which he underwent, were vehemently attached. This last (Origen), found a most celebrated imitator of his critical labours in Jerome, who devoted his great learning and industry to the criticism and interpretation, and a Latin version of the Old Testament.-Before the end, however, of this period, some versions of the Old Testament were first executed by the Christians, such as the Syriac and the Latin Italic, which preceded that of Jerome.

14. About the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century flourished Augustine, celebrated among the Latins more on account of his genius than learning, who has bestowed some pains in inter-

preting the Old Testament, and also first treated of the mode in which the sacred books were to be explained, in his writings on Christian doctrine: for we can scarcely reckon as belonging to this subject, what Jerome says in his Epistle to Sammachius respecting the best manner of interpreting, in which he only details the method which he himself followed; neither can we consider as belonging to it the Greek Epistles of Isiodorus the Pellusiote, the noblest of Chrysostom's disciples, who lived in the fifth century, which, although they may be said to be written on the interpretation of the sacred volume, yet only treat of those passages which are to be found in the Scriptures applicable to teaching us to guide our lives aright. But, connected with this subject, certainly is the introduction to the Divine Scriptures (εἰσαγωγη εις τας θειας γεαφας) of Adrian, who lived in the same century.

15. After the fifth century, the state of the interpretation of the sacred text became more and more wretched, and this continued to go on till the fifteenth century, so that at first very few, and finally none, existed who contributed any thing to the right interpretation of the whole Scripture, but particularly to that of the Old Testament. For, by degrees, the desire of true learning, and the cultivation of polite literature, had become quite extinct, so that learned men were very rare who could read, or in any way understand the Hebrew books. And to this we must add, from the fifth century downwards, the contentions, disputes, hatred, and wars subsisting among the different religious sects.

16. In the twelfth century, the scholastic theology, which originated in the perverse use of the Aristotelian philosophy, arose, or certainly from that period very greatly prevailed, and for a considerable time afterwards was firmly established; and the consesequence was, that those who delighted in it, argued with minute, and often absurd subtility on religion, while they never once thought of interpreting the Scriptures. Those again who were opposed to them, and were distinguished by the title of Biblical Doctors, by their mystical and allegorical interpretations, rather darkened than illustrated the sacred books; and these, by degrees, became much diminished in number.

17. The universities which, in the same twelfth century, were founded in Europe, and in which the learned languages, and also the Oriental dialects, were taught, at first produced no change in the interpretation of the Scriptures. The expeditions into Asia, called the crusades, begun in the former century and continued long afterwards, had taken off the minds of most men from any sort of study of the sacred volume; but, being the cause why a vast number of Greeks left their native country, and migrated into Italy and other European countries, these excited a love of literature in various parts of Europe; and the pursuit of learning by degrees reviving through means of the instituted universities, aided and began to prepare the way for a better interpretation of the sacred code.

18. In the second century, therefore, before the Reformation, Nicolaus Lyranus became celebrated as

an interpreter of Scripture. To him Luther is very much indebted. But the art of printing, which was invented in the fifteenth century, was the most powerful means of disseminating quickly and extensively those sounder views which were afterwards entertained regarding Scripture criticism.

19. But as the reviving love of learning, and the daily increasing study of doctrines, hastened and most happily assisted the reformation of religion, so, among those who followed this purer form of religion, there was thus generated a greater liberty and a much more correct method of interpretation.

20. In the sixteenth century then, when a clear light shone upon religion, which had been so much obscured, the two men who were the principal leaders of the reformation, Luther and Calvin, expended much labour in translating and explaining even the books of the Old Testament, if we think of their time and the aids which they possessed. Erasmus too, who did not dare to embrace their party, although he mightily contributed to the reformation of religion, has merited immortal praise by what he has done in aid of the better interpretation of the books of the New Testament. He, however, did not expend any labour in elucidating the books of the Old Testament.

21. As the reformers of religion were accustomed to defend their cause by arguments taken from the Scriptures, they therefore bestowed much pains on the right interpretation of the sacred volume, and imposed even upon their adversaries a necessity of some application to the same study. But, from the continual disputations on both sides, originated by degrees a

polemical mode of interpreting and explaining the sacred books which for some time prevailed, by which every one endeavoured to prove the opinions of his own party from the Scriptures, and not unfrequently to ascribe to the sacred writers opinions with which they were quite unacquainted, and opposed to their plain meaning.

22. The sixteenth century was rendered illustrious by a conjoined edition of some ancient versions of the whole sacred code, and consequently of the Old Testament, which had been made at various times both by Jews and Christians. In this the Papists merited great praise; for, through their care, the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglot Bibles, very excellent editions, were brought out; and one of them, Flaminius Nobilis, was the first, who in this century endeavoured to collect and edite the fragments of the ancient Greek interpreters. The Polyglot Bibles which in this century were edited by the Protestants, did not attain to the same degree of celebrity; but John Drusius, who was much esteemed among the Reformed for his great learning, enlarged greatly the remains of those ancient interpreters.

23. In the same age Sixtus Senensis, by the publication of his *Bibliotheca Sancta*, in which he, among other things, explained the art of expounding Scripture, seems to have gained no small praise to the Popish body. But far superior to him was Mathias Flacius Illyricus among the Lutherans. who, in his *Clavis Scripturæ Sacræ*, first shewed the true method of interpreting Scripture, as far as it could be investigated and exhibited to others at that time.

24. The study of the Old Testament was much increased during the seventeenth century. For, besides some ancient versions, or parts of them, which were edited separately, a more enlarged edition of the Polyglot Bible was published at Paris, and afterwards a still more perfect one at London. Some, besides, and among them even the Papists themselves, laboured to illustrate either all the books of the Old Testament, or particular books or passages. Others were solicitous to explain the history and other events of the Old Testament. Others attained high praise by their cultivation of the Oriental languages, such, for instance, as our countrymen Erpenius and Golius, while John Cocceius exhibited singular skill in the Hebrew language and idiom. Others began to apply to the criticism of the Old Testament with a noble boldness, such as Ludovicus Capellus of the reformed body, and Richard Simon among the Papists-both of whom appeared to the men of their own time too free in their views. And, not to mention more who published books connected with Sacred Hermeneutics, Solomon Glassius in this century particularly distinguished himself, whose book on Sacred Philology<sup>2</sup> has long been

<sup>\*</sup> This work, under the title of Sal. Glassii Philologia Sacra his temporibus accommodata, has been republished by D. Jo. Aug. Dathe, and Geo. Laur. Bauer. That part of it comprising the Grammatica ct Rhetorica Sacra by Dathe, is almost indispensable to the understanding of the syntax and figurative language of the Old Testament. It differs in many respects from the original work of Glassius, and is much more correct. The part by Bauer, containing the Critica ct Hermeneutica Sacra, is an entirely new work, with a trifling exception. It

esteemed a standard work, and even in our age is very valuable. The *glory*, however, of this age, was our countryman Grotius, who yet holds, and long will possess, the chief place among the interpreters of the New Testament, and no common praise is due to him for his annotations on the Old Testament, which, however, would have been much higher had he bestowed the same labour on the Old, as he did on the New Testament.

25. From the seventeenth century down to our age, the interpretation of the Old Testament has very greatly advanced, particularly among those who had happily delivered themselves from the long worn shackles of the ancient superstition. The true way of studying the Hebrew language, by making use of the light to be derived from the cognate Oriental languages, was first discovered by Albert Schultens, who himself gained immortal glory by his interpretations of the Old Testament. And there were not a few who employed themselves with honour in the explication of the words, and of the whole Hebrew phraseology, and particularly of the Poetic diction. The number of those is also very great who have thrown much more light than was before possible on the subject matter itself, both by the use of adventitious assistance, and by undertaking journeys into the East.

26. In a later age, much labour has been bestowed

contains a great deal of valuable information, particularly in the first section or *Critica Sacra*; but the second section has intermixed with it much exceptionable matter. The original work is still, however, well worthy of a careful perusal.—*Tr*.

on the criticism of the Old Testament. In France, Houbigant, by a collation of manuscripts and ancient versions, and not unfrequently by calling in the aid of conjecture, endeavoured to correct many passages. After him Benjamin Kennicott, in England, caused all the Hebrew copies which were any where to be found to be compared, and the different various readings to be extracted from them, and to be published: and, not long after, John Bernard de Rossi, in Italy, endeavoured to enlarge and complete this laborious undertaking, and to render it more adapted to general use, by a very frequent collation of the ancient versions. This part of critical study was also much aided by the labour which was bestowed, particularly in bringing the most ancient Greek version into a better state, and in collecting with more care the fragments of the other Greek versions: the consequence of which was, that this sort of criticism gained very many patrons. Of a very recent age, however, is that higher criticism, as it is called, which treats of some more important parts in the same manner as common criticism does of words and phrases, and inquires with the greatest freedom into the manner in which the ancient sacred books were composed, and by what means they were moulded into that form in which they have come down to us.

27. In the astonishing number of interpreters of the Old Testament, produced in later times, it was not possible that there should not have been a great diversity of method adopted by very many of them, according to the diversity of their times and genius. Among the Papists, although freedom of interpreta-

tion was restrained by the stricter limits in which they were confined by their religion, in consequence of which they were prevented from proceeding freely in this work, yet there were to be found, even among them, some who distinguished themselves in this department; such as Augustin Calmet about the beginning of the eighteenth century, much celebrated both for his Commentary on the sacred code, and also for his Dictionary of the Bible, and another in the middle of the same century, less commonly known, but remarkable for his varied erudition, Alexius Symmachus Mazochius, who, in his Spicilegium Biblicum, (Biblical Gleanings) which was confined to the Old Testament, seems fully to merit the praise of a learned and ingenious interpreter. Among those, again, from whose minds the reformation of religion had shaken off the yoke of servitude, this happy change only in the slow progress of time, exerted all that power which it might, and certainly ought to have had.

28. Even in the beginning, therefore, of the eighteenth century, and for some time afterwards, there were very many who delighted in allegorical and mystical interpretations of Scripture; and not a few who were rather controversial Theologians than Interpreters. But a sounder mode of interpretation began to prevail more and more every day, and it, alone, by degrees became approved by the lovers of genuine liberty; a mode which, employing the necessary aids, endeavoured to discover the meaning of the writers, not only from the idioms of the language which they used, but likewise illustrated and confirmed the meaning thus discovered, from the genius of the age in which they

lived, and from their manners, circumstances, and design in writing; and, consequently, never sought to discover in them any thing but what could be shewn with probability to have been in their minds.

29. But that noble liberty of interpretation, a benefit which we acknowledge to have been conferred upon us by the reformation of religion, came at last to be shamefully abused by some, and degenerated, through the proneness of mankind to rush into extremes, into the most unrestrained licentiousness. According to the most recent canons of this class of interpreters, we ought to admit nothing in the sacred volume to be true, unless what is agreeable to the common order of things: and, conformably to these canons, whatever is related in Scripture as different from that order, must all be explained by the interpreter in a manner consistent with it: so that what would deservedly be accounted unallowable with regard to the profane writers of antiquity, is not only allowed with regard to the most ancient sacred books, but is even reekoned laudable. And there are not certainly wanting persons in our times, who twist 2 to a moral purpose whatever may tend to give offence in these books, being no way solicitous regarding the most natural or plain sense of the words.

30. In fine, during that space of time of which we have just been speaking, many books were published,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> In the original, "qui, quidquid offensioni ducatur in iisdem libris, ad moralem usum contorqueant." I think I understand the author's allusion, but I deem it not worth while to write a long note explaining my conjectures.—Tr.

which treated of the method of interpreting both the Old Testament and the whole sacred volume. Some of these, however, confined themselves solely to the critical part; while others, under the name of introductions, embraced all those things which might be reckoned to pertain to the understanding of the contents, the authors, the composition, and the ancient versions of the whole of the Old Testament, and of each of its parts. Of the first sort, the more excellent are, John Alphonsus Turretin's Tract, in two parts, on the Interpretation of Scripture, and two more recent books written in the German language, the one of which, explaining Biblical Hermeneutics generally, has G. F. Seiler for its author, and the other, an Attempt at the Interpretation of the Old Testament. is from the pen of G. W. Meyer. Of a sort between the two, we may mention the older Sacred Criticism of the Old Testament of J. G. Carpzovius, and the more recent book, under the same title, of Bauer. Of the last sort, it will be sufficient to mention Carpzovius' Introduction to the Canonical books of the Old Testament, and J. G. Eichhorn's Introduction to the books of the Old Testament, together with that of John Jahn, published lately in the German language; and lastly, L. Berthold's Historico-critical Introduction to all the Canonical and Apocryphal books of the Old and New Testament, which, not long ago, appeared in the same language. Respecting these, and other writings on these subjects, it is proper to be guided by the golden maxim of the Apostle, 1 Thessal. v. 21, " Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

#### § 3.

#### The difficulty of Interpreting the Old Testament.

- 1. However much labour may have been bestowed in these later times in endeavouring to arrive at a better understanding of the books of the Old Testament, still the interpretation of them continues to be very difficult. And, indeed, the multitude of the various explications of one and the same passage sufficiently demonstrates the difficulty. It must be allowed, however, that the different opinions of interpreters should often be attributed to their own preconceived notions, rather than to the writings of the Old Testament. But there is a definite and common cause of all these diversities, which we must seek for in the very difficult understanding of the Old Testament.
- 2. For the language in which the books of the Old Testament were written, although it has received much light in these later times, presents even yet, no little obscurity, which the most skilful interpreters cannot dispel. In general, too, it is very different from our language, and survives in the books of the Old Testament only. Their whole composition, but particularly the more sublime and poetic portion, has in it something quite foreign to our mode of expressing ourselves. There are, too, some words which occur either very rarely, or only once, and consequently are of dubious or uncertain signification. We find also, abstruse, elliptical, and sometimes ambiguous phrases.

In a word, the very high antiquity of these books, written in a language long since extinct, is a cause why we often find great difficulties in understanding their diction.

- 3. This great antiquity of these books, is also the reason why we frequently find much difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of their authors, even when we think that we understand the words. The most recent of them, are of the remote age in which Herodotus, the father of history among the Greeks, lived; and the most ancient, are far anterior to the age of Homer himself. These books, too, were written in countries where both the modes of thinking, and the manners and customs, are very different from ours. Therefore is it very difficult for the most skilful interpreter completely to penetrate into the full meaning of the authors.
- 4. What increases this difficulty of interpretation very much, is the immense multitude and variety of things which are treated of in these writings, and the almost infinite diversity of subjects which are handled by the individual writers. Those, too, which are written in a more sublime strain, for the most part oppose greater difficulties to the interpreter.
- 5. Finally, there are no books in which the employment of criticism is more frequently called for, than in those of the Old Testament, because there are none, taken in whole, more ancient; and however numerous the assistances for exercising the critical art may be, the proper and prudent use of them requires very great and very difficult labour.

#### § 4.

The principal Reasons which, in our times, particularly recommend the Interpretation of the Old Testament.

- 1. Notwithstanding the great difficulty of the books of the Old Testament which we have briefly touched upon, there are some, and these too no trifling reasons, which recommend the study of these books. Their very antiquity, which renders them often very difficult to be understood, has in it something alluring, and which excites veneration.
- 2. The people among whom these books were written, are indeed justly esteemed less distinguished than the Greeks or Romans. But their changes of fortune and history are very remarkable, and some periods of their story were very splendid.
- 3. The knowledge of the things handed down to us in these writings is, for the most part, highly useful: and there are no books of remote antiquity from which more information can be derived for elucidating the ancient condition of mankind, nations, arts, and sciences; none in which the genius of human nature, such as it exhibits itself in the virtues and vices of individuals, is more placed as it were before our eyes: none, in fine, in which we can find equally elevated conceptions of the supreme God.
- 4. In these books are many things which will give pleasure to the cultivators of polite literature. There

is not indeed in them that perfection of art and polish which we justly admire in the best writers of Greece and Rome. But they have their own beauties, and these too of the highest class. There is a certain admirable simplicity in the historical writings, and in the poetical compositions so great sublimity, and as it were majesty, such as you will search for in vain elsewhere; and which will be more fully felt, the more any one has advanced in understanding them.

- 5. In the Scriptures of the Old, and in those of the New Testament, we adore the same God who has blessed mankind by his revelations. Between these writings there is the strictest bond of connection; and the understanding of the Old Testament is so useful to the interpretation of the New, that the more labour any one has bestowed on the former, the more will he be prepared for applying himself with success to the latter.
- 6. Finally, it is the happiness of our times that there are many more aids within our reach for the interpretation of the Old Testament than were possessed in former ages; and if any one will employ these aright, and in a manner suitable to the spirit of our age, he may hope for a success in this study, however difficult, which will much more than compensate the greatness of the labour bestowed.

#### § 5.

#### The extent and Plan of the proposed Work.

1. Whilst, on the one hand, there are so many causes of difficulty which attend the interpretation of

the Old Testament, and on the other, so many motives to incite us to make the attempt with all our energies, I indeed confess that I have perceived the force of each of these motives the more, the longer I have been employed in this study. But I must not dissemble that the motives inciting to it are much more powerful upon my mind, than those which seem to deter me from it.

- 2. And I wish I could excite and strengthen in the minds of those, who are principally interested, the same feeling, which is more alive to the usefulness of this study than to its difficulties and impediments! With this view, I have been altogether actuated in preparing these Principles of the Interpretation of the Old Testament for assisting in the study of this book, which deserves so highly to be recommended in these times.
- 3. In order to comprise in our brief syllabus, all that belongs to the subject proposed, we shall, first, treat of those acquirements and qualifications which will render one a good interpreter of the Old Testament in the present age; in the second place, we shall discuss those points which have a reference to the interpretation of the Old Testament in general; and, lastly, we shall consider those things which it is necessary principally to attend to in interpreting each of the books of the Old Testament, according to the diversity of subject and style, which is generally called the *special interpretation*<sup>a</sup> of the Old Testament.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> The words in the original are " que specialis appellari solet, V. T. interpretatio." I am not aware that any such

4. In laying down these Principles of the Interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, I have followed the mode of comprehending in distinct paragraphs the separate points treated of, summed up as it were in short propositions, and of afterwards illustrating these by such observations as seemed necessary.

phraseology as *general* and *special* interpretation has been adopted in our language. The meaning is, however, easily understood,—Tr.



## PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

THROSET

# OLD TESTAMENT.

#### PART FIRST.

OF THOSE ACQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS WHICH
WILL RENDER ONE A GOOD INTERPRETER OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT IN THE PRESENT AGE.

#### SECTION FIRST.

OF THOSE STUDIES INSEPARABLY CONNECTED WITH THE RIGHT INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

#### CHAPTER FIRST.

ON THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE WRITTEN.

## § 1.

Since the object I have proposed to myself, is not merely to lay down the rules to be observed in the interpretation of the books of the Old Testament, but, in general, to teach all that is necessary to form a good interpreter of them, such as may be expected in the present age; for this purpose it seems necessary, in the outset, to

take a view, first of those things which must be known and attended to, by a well qualified interpreter; next, of the virtues and endowments of mind most particularly to be desired in him; and, finally, of some branches of learning highly useful to him: consequently, I must, in preference to every thing else, begin with treating of the language in which the books of the Old Testament have been written.

Observation 1. It is very evident, that a knowledge of a great variety of things is required of him who desires to become a useful and valuable interpreter of the books of the Old Testament, in the present day. To this, in a certain degree also, are conducive both high intellectual powers, and likewise certain good dispositions of the heart. There are, besides, branches of learning which, although, perhaps, they may seem less necessary, are however productive of great advantages. We shall, therefore, be obliged to discuss these three points, before we proceed to the particular manner of interpreting the Old Testament.

Obs. 2. To the studies, therefore, connected by an indissoluble bond, with the interpretations of the Old Testament, I not only refer, according to my plan, whatever pertains to the language in which these ancient sacred books are written, but likewise what is useful for exercising the critical art regarding them; nay, even I am desirous that a becoming regard should be paid to the authenticity, integrity, and historical

faith to be given to these books; and to the remarking of the divine interpositions as to religion, which are contained in them. Since we must begin with the language in which the books of the Old Testament have been written, let us now see what is particularly to be remarked with regard to it, which will be useful to our purpose.

## § 2.

By far the greatest part of what is comprehended in the books of the Old Testament, is written in that language which we call Hebrew.

- Obs. 1. The Hebrew language got its name from the Hebrews, the forefathers of the Israelitish nation, among whom it was in use. It might also have been called the Jewish language, as being that employed by the subjects of the Jewish kingdom; 2 Kings xviii. 26; 2 Chron. xxxii. 18; Isaiah xxxvi. 11; and also the Canaanitish, Isaiah xix. 18; not only because it was used in the country of Canaan by the Israelites, but likewise because the language of the Canaanites was, in its origin and genius, the same with that of the Hebrews. The superstition of the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, conferred upon it the title of the holy language.
- Obs. 2. The Hebrew language is very ancient, and its original, in the opinion of all the most learned, must be referred to an age long prior to the origin of the Israelitish race. Nay, it even seems to have been coeval with the human race, and to have been

that language which, surviving the deluge with Noah, was the only dialect in the new world, and common to the succeeding generations; Genes. xi. 1. It afterwards contracted a degree of diversity among the different nations which bordered upon each other, such as we observe in the dialects of one and the same language: but, among the Hebrews, it seems probable that, approaching nearest to its primitive nature and genius, it of all the others retained the clearest marks of that simplicity which is peculiar to children, and points in no obscure manner to the infancy of the human race.

Obs. 3. A difference of opinion exists regarding the antiquity of the Hebrew letters which we now use. It is impossible to decide positively in this matter; but it seems most probable that these letters, from their very nature and form, are the most ancient. For, as in the East, the art of writing was in use from the very earliest times, so one and the same mode of writing this very ancient language always prevailed: which, in the course of time, acquired some diversity in its form, among the different nations to which it was common, but among the Hebrews deviated less from its original form than among the other nations. The letters, then, which the Hebrews originally used, were more rudely shaped, and continued with very little change down to the Babylonish captivity; but after the Jews were restored to their country, although in their general conformation they still remained the same as before, yet they underwent some change, by which they attained greater elegance. In which form they now present a character of distinguished beauty:

and it is not without reason that we believe Ezra to have been the inventor of their present form, used in the copies of the sacred books. At least no one will, I think, persuade me that the letters used, in that most impure of all dialects, the Samaritan, are more ancient in their nature than the Hebrew.

- Obs. 4. What antiquity is to be assigned to the final letters we have no means of determining. It is no improbable opinion that they were already in use when the Alexandrian version was made; and were originally used to express numbers greater than those which were marked by the common letters of the Alphabet; but afterwards were deemed proper to be placed at the end of words.
- Obs. 5. There is no sufficient reason for doubting that the ancient Hebrews had certain marks for vowels, which, when it seemed necessary, might be attached to the letters; but which, like those used by the Arabians even at the present day, and by the ancient Syrians, were very few, probably only three, and those of the most simple form. Nor is it any objection to this opinion, that the Mosaic Pentateuch is used without points in the Jewish Synagogues, which custom peculiar reasons<sup>a</sup> introduced after the labours
- a The author ought to have stated these peculiar reasons, or at least referred to some book where they would have been found enumerated. It is believed that only one reason has been attempted to be brought, by the defenders of the high antiquity of the Hebrew points, to account for this universal custom of having the principal copy of the Pentateuch in every Jewish synagogue without points; which has been considered by most learned men as a virtual acknowledgment, by the Jews themselves, of the recent origin of the vowel points

of the Talmudists in editing these books were finished. But it is by no means probable that vowel marks of any sort were of the same high antiquity with the letters. Perhaps certain small points were begun to be added to some words, by which the diversity of pronunciation and signification were indicated, and these, in process of time, gave rise to the vowel points; of which very ancient custom, traces seem to remain in the writing of the Syriac language. Certainly, however, we owe the Hebrew vowels which are now employed in pronouncing the words, to the Masorites, or certain learned Jews in later ages, who applied themselves with the most minute eagerness to the grammar and criticism of the sacred books. By them the vowel points were invented and adapted for conveying the ancient pronunciation of the words, which, in this most sacred language, they endeavoured to preserve, and, as far as possible, religiously to transmit to posterity. The letters ys, called matres lectionis, or the principal helps for reading without points, only began in later times to supply the place of vowels.

Obs. 6. By the same Masorites, the Schevata,

This reason the reader will find stated and well refuted by Bauer in his edition of Sal. Glass. Phil. Sacr. sect. i. p. 141. Muntinghe, a countryman of the author, in an excellent little work, entitled Brevis expositio Critices Vet. Fæd. published so late as 1827, thus expresses himself on this subject,—" In synagogis porro Judæi Codice utuntur Pentateuchi non punctato, ut sic adumbrent ipsum Mosis αντογραφον in arca repositum," p. 35; which fact he considers to be one strong proof, among many others, of the recent addition of the vowel points to the Hebrew language.—Tr.

as they are called, were invented; these they employed, partly to mark the letters to which points were not attached, and partly to suggest some fugitive and scarcely audible sounds, occasionally used in pronunciation, but not at all connected with the vowels. And, for the same reason, the *Patach furtive* was invented by them, to indicate a very slender vowel sound, used in pronunciation before certain letters.

Obs. 7. Nor do the diacritic points attached to some letters, seem to have been originally employed, although they are certainly, for the most part, adapted to the ancient mode of pronunciation; as, for instance, the point of the letter  $\dot{\boldsymbol{w}}$  or  $\dot{\boldsymbol{v}}$ , Dagesch or Mappik. The Arabians and Syrians have points of the same kind; but these are also not of great antiquity.

Obs. 8. The marks of the accents too, are of modern origin. The other Hebrew dialects, or the cognate languages, have them not. They have in them, however, something adapted to the ancient state of the language, in so far as they mark where the emphasis was placed, and indicate the manner in which the separate members of the sentences were divided: and some marks of punctuation seem to have been in use, and occasionally attached, some time before the coming of Christ. The origin of the forms of the accents themselves is, not altogether without probability, sought for in the musical notes wont to be attached to the sacred hymns; which were afterwards added even to the prose writings, for the sake of indicating a certain modulation; and, indeed, it appears that the Jews rather sung than read their sacred writings.

Obs. 9. The unchanging nature of the Hebrew language, as observable in almost all the writings of the Old Testament, deserves to be remarked. For, in the great diversity of ages and authors, and of style, both prose and poetical, the language retains the highest similarity. In the writings composed before the Babylonish captivity, very little change is observable which it had undergone. But, after the Hebrews had been expelled from their country, and were scattered among other nations, they were unable to regain the original purity and strength of their language, even in the best times after their restoration to their country. And, at last, in consequence of the various vicissitudes to which they were subjected, and particularly the final destruction of their state by the Romans, the Hebrew language went altogether out of common use, so that even the more learned and skilful Jews were quite unable, in their writings, to exhibit its native image when now dead.

#### § 3.

Only a few parts of the Old Testament are composed in that dialect generally denominated the Chaldaic, and which is allied to the Hebrew. There are, however, to be found some foreign words.

Obs. 1. We find written in Chaldaic from the middle of the 4th verse of the second chapter of Daniel, to the end of the seventh chapter, and from the fourth chaper, 7th verse of Ezra, to chap. vi. 18, and likewise chap. vii. 12—16. The Chaldaic verse which we have in the prophetic writings of Jeremiah, chap. x. 11, is justly suspected of not being genuine, as it interrupts and confuses the connection of the sentiments.

- Obs. 2. The Chaldaic language derives its name from the nation of the Chaldees. The genius of the vernacular language of that people was quite different from that of the language called Chaldaic, as may be collected from the Chaldaic proper names. We must seek for the native country of the Chaldees in the northern parts of Asia, far distant from the country of the Israelites, Jerem. v. 15, vi. 22. Pouring out from their native seats in immense multitudes in search of new habitations, and directing their course southwards, they attacked the Babylonians: and, having subverted their empire, they in time adopted the language of the conquered people, which, in consequence, came to be denominated the Chaldaic.
- Obs. 3. This Babylonian or Chaldaic language might also be called Aramæan; Dan. ii. 4. The name Aramæa, in its widest signification, was given to the whole tract of country which lies between the Orontes and the Euphrates, and between this last river and the Tigris; nay, in some parts it extended farther. In the eastern part of this tract, principally between the Euphrates and the Tigris, lay Babylonia or Eastern Aramæa; and in the western part, between the Orontes and the Euphrates, Syria or Western Aramæa was situated.

Obs. 4. The language in use in all this extent of

country was the Aramæan,<sup>a</sup> which was nearly allied to the Hebrew. The parts of Daniel and Ezra which we find in this dialect are written with the Hebrew letters and points; for these writings were destined for the use of the Jews, and from them they have come down to us written in that manner, to which they were principally accustomed. The Chaldaic language, indeed, although made use of by the Jews, was not however, as that of the Hebrew, venerable in respect of sanctity, and, therefore, was not supposed to require the same high degree of religious regard. The most of those things which we may have to say, however, regarding the study of the Hebrew language, will equally apply to the Chaldaic, from the intimate connection between the two dialects.

Obs. 5. In reading the books of the Old Testament, some foreign words from time to time occur. In Gen. xxxi. 47, we find two Aramæan words, but these are from a cognate dialect. There are many Egyptian words, particularly in the books of Moses and the poem of Job. In the later books, some Persic words occur: none of which, consequently, can be expounded from the Hebrew tongue. Some have been of

<sup>a</sup> For some good remarks on this dialect, the reader may consult Pfannkuche's Dissertation " On the Language of Palestine in the Age of Christ," translated in the second vol. of the Biblical Cabinet.

As to the hypothesis maintained by the author in this dissertation, it will be well that the student, before forming an opinion, should peruse the tenth section of the first chapter of the second part of *Hug's Introduction to the New Testament*; p. 32 of the second volume of the Eng. Translation.— Tr.

opinion that in the books of Daniel and Ecclesiastes there were certain words of Greek extraction: but whether this be correct or not, is not our business here to inquire.

## § 4.

The knowledge of the Hebrew language must be altogether derived from its own sources namely, from the Old Testament.

Obs. 1. The Hebrew writings which we find in the volume of the Old Testament, are the only ones which remain in that language. Certain Talmudical writings are indeed extant, which may seem to be Hebrew, and are usually so called: but their diction is less pure, and is greatly contaminated. Still more impure are the later Rabbinical writings. The language at present used by most of the Jews, is only a peculiar barbarous dialect, made up of a mixture of the Rabbinical dialect and German.

Obs. 2. Thus then, in the same manner as the knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages must be sought for in those writers who formerly spoke those languages in their purity, so, undoubtedly, the proper manner of attaining the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue is, by application to the books of the Old Testament alone, its only pure source. And there have been persons who, by assiduous and diligent reading of these books, when scarcely any other aid was to be had, acquired eminent skill in this language; such, for instance, as S. Glassius, and J. Coe-

ceius, both of whom we have mentioned in our introduction, § 2. Obs. 4.

### § 5.

But, however, since we have not very ample remains of the Hebrew language in the Old Testament, these are not sufficient to give us such a knowledge of it, as will be altogether satisfactory. We must, therefore, seek for such additional assistance as we can find; and, for this purpose, none is more valuable than what the cognate oriental dialects supply.

Obs 1. There are writings in the Old Testament of such various kinds, and treating of such different subjects, that they contain a very great number of diverse words and forms of speech: but, still no one can believe that they contain the whole extent of the ancient language. Besides, we find not a few derivatives, whose primitives are lost; other words occur rarely, or only once; others are of obscure and uncertain signification; consequently, even the best Hebrew scholars, who were without the excellent aids enjoyed in later times, met with many words, in the explanation of which they were at a loss, and not a few, in explaining which, it has now been demonstrated that they erred.

Obs. 2. There have not, however, been wanting some, who themselves thought, and endeavoured to persuade others, that the Hebrew language, such as

it exists in the Old Testament, was quite sufficient for explaining itself; and who, in consequence, endeavoured to acquire the knowledge of it solely from itself, and to arrive at the signification of the words from the figure, situation, and similitude of the letters; or, by a comparison of passages, to lay down some general and abstract signification of words, through their own perspicacity; or who proposed some ingenious fiction of their imagination for this purpose: among whom, the most celebrated for their opinions and attempts at conjectures, were Forster, Avenarius, Bohlius, Gussetius, Neumannus, and Loescherus.

Obs. 3. Some assistance may be derived from the traditions of the Jews: but this is confined chiefly to words and expressions in general use, and their common signification, but are of little value with regard to such as are more rare, or occur but once only. For although the Jews had a great religious care of the sacred books and their diction, it was not, however, possible, that in the heavy calamities of their nation, and through a long series of ages, they should, by a faithful and unerring tradition, have retained the true significations of all words in all cases; or that they should not have committed frequent mistakes. And there have been Rabbins who ingenuously confessed, that there are many words so very obscure as to render it necessary to search for their explanation from other sources.

Obs. 4. Neither are the ancient versions of the Old Testament without their use in this respect. The authors of those which were made immediately from the sacred volume, had more knowledge of the Hebrew language the nearer they were to the times

in which the language was yet in some degree flourishing. They do not, however, deserve to be esteemed in all respects faithful guides to the knowledge of it. For it by no means survived in its ancient vigour, in the age even of the most ancient of these interpreters; and they, consequently, in translating the more obscure and rare words and forms of expression, have given not a few indications of their ignorance and unskilfulness.

Obs. 5. Our safest and most useful resort, therefore, is to the allied and cognate oriental languages. For, since the very ancient language which the Hebrews used, was in so far common to them with the other nations, as that in each of them was found something peculiar, generally known by the term dialect, nothing certainly is more consonant to reason, than to apply for aid to those dialects, in order to be enabled to restore some life to the dead language. In the signification, indeed, of the same words common to the different oriental dialects, we frequently observe the greatest difference: but this takes place in the secondary senses, and not in that original and very simple idea, from which those in course of time proceeded: and often, too, the greatest similitude of the signification now in use of the same words exists in all the dialects. A great change also, of the vowels, nay even of the cognate consonants, takes place in the words which are common to the different dialects; and, in the construction and whole form of the language, there is something peculiar to each of these dialects. Still, however, the easily discernible lineaments of a sisterly connection remain, which shew them to have been all descended from one common parent.

Obs. 6. These languages are distinguished by the appellation Oriental, because they were formerly used, and partly continue to be so at this day, by those nations which we are accustomed to consider as inhabiting the Eastern part of our world. In Germany, of late, it has become customary rather to denominate them Shemitish, as considering the former denomination too vague; and because it seems more proper to designate languages from the nations by which they are spoken, than from any particular country. But, since the Canaanitish nations, which were not the descendants of Shem, but of Ham, spoke a dialect of these languages; and since Elam, the son of Shem, was the principal progenitor of the Persians, (Gen. x. 22.) whose language was not related to the Hebrew, this new appellation does not seem to deserve to be preferred to the former; and we deem it better to retain the ancient one, provided it is always borne in mind, that those only are called Eastern languages, which are intimately related to each other by affinity of dialect.

Obs. 7. The following are esteemed the principal of these Oriental dialects—the Arabic, Aramæan, Samaritan, and Ethiopic; to which some add the Talmudic and Rabbinical; regarding these, it will be proper to treat in a separate chapter. Not connected with them, are some other languages, besides the Persic and Turkish, used still in Eastern countries, although they employ the Arabic characters. But these have indeed a very different nature and origin.

#### § 6.

The greatest attention to Grammar is highly valuable in acquiring a right knowledge of the Hebrew language, and in arriving at a correct interpretation of the Old Testament: and the use of the best Lexicons is also no mean assistance in gaining these objects.

- Obs. 1. There have occasionally been persons, by no means contemptible for their attainments in the philology and criticism of the Old Testament, who, from not being sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the grammar of the Hebrew language, have put absurd interpretations on some passages, or suspected errors to exist where there were none. But no one can be a good interpreter of books composed in any language, who is not a good grammarian. The grammatical study of the Hebrew language, however, has in itself many things which will give delight to an ingenuous mind. For the more one advances in this study, the greater pleasure will he derive from that language, which unites the greatest simplicity of the language of children, with both an energy and conciseness truly admirable.
- Obs. 2. The first Christians who learned and taught others Hebrew grammar, followed the Jews as their sole guides. But, from the time of A. Schultens, the immortal restorer of Hebrew literature, the true method of studying the Hebrew language, which

is by a comparison with the other Oriental dialects, began to be pursued.

Obs. 3. Dictionaries are at all times most useful aids for acquiring a knowledge of the Hebrew language, and for interpreting the Old Testament, as they give at one view the different forms of the same word, and its different derivatives. And the greater and more correct use which is made of the cognate dialects in these works, the more will they be valuable for imparting a sound knowledge of the Hebrew language.

#### CHAPTER II.

OF THE COGNATE DIALECTS OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE.

#### § 1.

SINCE, in supplying the defects of the Hebrew language, those languages which, as dialects, are most nearly allied to it, are the most effectual means; in this respect, undoubtedly, the first place is due to the Arabic dialect.

Obs. 1. In its external form, the Arabic language seems to differ exceedingly from the Hebrew. Their additional letters, however, are not new, but are some of the old ones marked merely by a point, to indicate a difference of pronunciation, and of signification

thence for the most part derived. They have likewise another order of the alphabet. The more ancient, however, was plainly similar to the Hebrew, and has always remained so when the letters are used to mark numbers. Besides, however different or more free the manner of writing which has prevailed among the Arabians, there still remains in some of their letters some degree of affinity with the Hebrew. The vowel points used by the Arabians are fewer and more simple; but in this respect they are nearer to the ancient mode employed formerly by the Hebrews.

Obs. 2. When, however, we attend to the internal structure of the Arabic language, we perceive the greatest similitude in it to the Hebrew. This is seen in the words and their use; in their phrases, and in the whole manner of expressing themselves. It is discernible also in the peculiar structure, and in the grammatical form of the language. Neither does the declension of the nouns in Arabic, which is unknown to the Hebrews, form any exception; for it is a late invention, and is probably in some degree an imitation of the Greeks, and has introduced no change into the language itself, or the structure of the nouns. It is rejected too by the common people; and the Arabians, who are most tenacious of their paternal customs, condemn it as a late invention of the grammarians of a particular country called حصرموت Hadramaut, a very ancient name, taken from one of the sons of Joktan, called הצרמות, Gen. x. 26.

Obs. 3. By how much the Arabic language is more ancient, and has been preserved in a state of purity to the present time, by so much the more is it

adapted to supply the defects of the Hebrew. The Arabians deduce the origin, both of their language and nation, partly from Joktan, whose posterity retired into Arabia, Gen. x. 25, 26, and who was of the race of Shem, as well as Abraham, the founder of the Israelitish nation, partly from Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar, by whose posterity it appears that a portion of Arabia was peopled. Gen. xvi. 12. But as the Arabian race was connected by the bonds of affinity with the Hebrew, so the languages of both had the same primitive language as their source, and were in nowise afterwards distinguished but by difference of dialect. Of this high antiquity, therefore, the Arabic language remains to this present day, and is in many parts of the world highly flourishing, and, as far as regards its internal nature, at all times, and everywhere, unchanged. In the peninsula of Arabia itself, in consequence of the separation from other countries, and the genius of the people little given to change, it has remained quite the same as it was in the remotest ages. And the changes which it has undergone are neither very great, nor have they affected the peculiar internal structure of the language. a Nay, even after it had extended itself far

a The translator is not chargeable with the confused statement in this paragraph. The author is manifestly labouring to exalt the value of a knowledge of the Arabic language to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and, from his eagerness to establish his point, has gone so far as to assert that the Arabic language has remained in the peninsula of Arabia quite unchanged from the time of its first inhabitants; that is, from the time of Joktan's sons to the present day. His mind seems to have had some misgivings as to the correctness

and wide beyond the bounds of Arabia, it was not very much changed; although it was in the inmost recesses of Arabia where it was most pure, and remained most unchanged. And in this language very many books, in every department of human learning, have been published, and a great number of writings, both in prose and verse, of which only a part have been printed. The Arabians themselves have always cultivated it with the greatest care; and there have not been wanting among them persons who have bestowed great labour in the formation of dictionaries. Its admirable application to explaining the Hebrew language was first clearly pointed out by Albert Schultens.

of this sweeping assertion, and he qualifies it in a vague manner in this last sentence.

No one will be disposed to deny the value of a knowledge of the cognate eastern dialects, and particularly of the Arabic, to aid the scholiast and lexicographer in the investigation of the signification of those words which but rarely occur in the Hebrew Scriptures. Perhaps, however, almost all that can be done in this way, has been already accomplished by the great scholars who have applied themselves to this subject since Schultens led the way to the elucidation of the Hebrew language, in its more unusual words, phrases, and constructions, from these cognate eastern dialects. The principal results of their investigations will be found in Winer's and Gesenius' Lexicons, and Rosenmuller's Scholia. It seems therefore doubtful whether the great expense of time and labour necessary to acquire these languages, and particularly the Arabic, will be repaid to the Theologian by the advantages gained : especially when it is recollected, what ought always to be borne in mind, that a language imperfectly learned, or not fully mastered, will, in critical investigations, be more likely to mislead than to assist .- Tr.

§ 2.

The Aramæan dialect is of no little value in explaining the Hebrew language, although not equal in this respect to the Arabic.

Obs. 1. That the Aramæan dialect, called the Syrian in 2 Kings xviii. 26. Isaiah xxxvi. 11, and of which we have already spoken in chap. i. § 3, is very ancient, and allied to the Hebrew, may be principally collected from Genes, xxxi, 47, where we find a name taken from it in which something of the peculiarity of this dialect is found. And as the same thing is perceptible also in the Chaldaic parts of Daniel and Ezra, in the Syriac version of the Bible, and other Aramæan writings, it is evident that this dialect, as far as its peculiar nature is concerned, was always very much the same; yet from the various vicissitudes to which the Aramæan race has been exposed, principally brought upon them by foreigners, it has been much more changed in progress of time than the Arabic.

Obs. 2. In the very great similitude between the Syriac and Chaldaic, which is the reason why they are called by the common name of Aramæan, we still find a very great difference between them in the letters and points, and particularly in the vowel points. The number of the letters, and their order, is however the same in both dialects. That the writing of the Chaldaic differs not from the Hebrew is owing to

the Jews, who employed the Chaldee language: but there is scarcely a ground of doubt that anciently the Hebrew writing was very similar to the Syriac. With respect to the letters, the Syriac is written in two ways: the more ancient, which is generally called Estrangelo, from the Greek word στεογγύλος, because it is of a rounder form, approaches more near to the Hebrew: The more recent again, which arose out of the other, has also retained clear indications of its ancient form. Its vowel marks are also of two kinds: the one sort older, consisting of mere points, and these few and very simple, approaching therefore very closely to the Arabic and the ancient Hebrew system; the other more recent, and derived from the Greek vowels which Theophilus of Edessa first employed in the eighth century, that he might more accurately express the pronunciation of proper names when translating Homer into Syriac verse.

Obs. 3. Nearly the same similitude exists between the Aramæan dialect and the Hebrew as between the Arabic and the Hebrew. The whole difference arises from a different use of the same words, and a more rare or more frequent employment of certain peculiar idioms, or in some trifling difference in grammatical composition or inflexion, or syntactical structure. In this dialect, however, there is generally a greater simplicity, rudeness, and clownishness, while the Hebrew is more clegant, and the Arabic more rich and luxuriant.

Obs. 4. The Aramæan dialect is now almost extinct, or at least exists only in a very weak and languid state. The Chaldaic language, such as it exist-

ed among the Jews for some time, as seen in some portions of Daniel and Ezra and the Chaldee paraphrases, finally underwent the same fate as the Hebrew.

The remains of the ancient Syriac language which still exist are very trifling, and much inferior in proportion to its original extent.

Obs. 5. The Hebrew may, however, derive no contemptible aid from the Aramæan dialect. It ought, however, chiefly to be employed, where it will be found very valuable, in illustrating the language of some of the later writers, such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi, and Ecclesiastes. There are many writings remaining, written partly in the Chaldaic language, or eastern Aramæan, partly in the Syriac or western Aramæan. Among these are some parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra, and the paraphrases of the Old Testament; and besides these, there are versions of the Old and New Testament, and many writings chiefly on theological subjects, which have only in part yet been published. It does not appear that poetry was ever cultivated with any success by the Aramæans, for which their language seems much less adapted than the Hebrew or Arabic. There exist some unedited Syriac Lexicons, which, however, we can scarcely suppose to approach to the excellence of the superior Arabic Dictionaries.

#### § 3.

The Ethiopic and Samaritan dialects are much less useful than the Arabic and Aramæan;

the Talmudic and Rabbinical are the least useful of all: and there is too little remaining worth notice of the Phenician and cognate Palmyrene language to be of any service.

Obs. 1. It may appear surprising that any offset from the primitive language should have been removed to such a distance as to be cultivated by the Ethiopians. But the Ethiopic dialect was not immediately propagated from it, but descended through the Arabic dialect; it being certain that even previous to the age of Moses there were Arabians who, passing the interposed gulf of the sea, migrated into the opposite region of Africa which lies above Egypt. This dialect then, in its internal structure, clearly shews that it is descended from the Arabic; while, in its external form, it recedes very far, both from the Arabic and from the other oriental dialects: and in its pronunciation it has contracted some roughness from the inflamed temperature of the African atmosphere. Its letters are twenty-six in number, and, differing from what is usual in the neighbouring languages, they are written from the left hand to the right. The vowel marks are joined to these letters in such a manner as to produce on them some change. All the change, however, seems to be derived partly from the usage of the Greeks, partly from the custom of the country, and partly from the genius of the inventor. It is now a dead language; the Amharic having succeeded into its place, which is derived from the ancient Ethiopic, and from a mixture of various African languages.

The use of the ancient language in its native country is wholly restricted to religion, and it only survives in some ecclesiastical writings, and in the translations of the sacred writings: of these, too, only a part has been printed, so that its utility is very much circumscribed.

Obs. 2. Still more circumscribed is the utility of the Samaritan dialect. It was peculiar to those persons of the vulgar class whom the Assyrian king left in the country after the destruction of the Israelitic kingdom of the ten tribes, and those new colonists from the Babylonish countries who were intermingled with them, 2 Kings xvii. 24; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9, 21; Isaiah xvii. 6, to which inhabitants of the country the name of Samaritans was applied, from Samaria, the chief city of the ancient kingdom. It is therefore a sort of degenerate shoot from the ancient Hebrew and Aramæan dialects, besides what other impurity it may have derived from the mixed rabble of various nations by whom it was spoken. It has now almost gone out of use; and the few remaining Samaritans of the present day use vernacularly the Arabic language. Scarcely are any relics of it preserved save in the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch. Its letters themselves, derived seemingly from the Hebrew and Aramæan in their ruder state, have likewise suffered some degree of deterioration from the admixture of people already alluded to. No vowel marks added to the letters appear; from which, however, it by no means follows that such were never used by the Samaritans.

Obs. 3. What is called the Talmudic language, is

divided into the more ancient, in which the Mischna, or text of the Talmud, is written; and the more recent, in which the Gemara, or the supplement and commentary of that work, is composed. The older the specimens of this dialect are, the greater similitude they have to the Hebrew, and approach nearly as much to it as the Latinity of the middle ages to the purer language of the Augustan age. The Rabbinical language again, as it is called, manifests in most of its words its Hebrew origin, and bears the same relation to the ancient Hebrew language, as the modern Italian to the ancient Roman: so that if any aid is to be derived from either of these dialects, particularly, however, from the Talmudic, towards a better understanding of the Hebrew, it is at best but trifling, and scarcely worthy of being mentioned.

Obs. 4. Had any written remains of the ancient Phenician language, which was not unlike the old Hebrew, come down to us, no small advantage would have redounded from these. We have only, however, a very few fragments of this utterly lost language scattered here and there, and much corrupted, such particularly as that passage of Plautus in his Poenul. Act. 5, sc. 1. In the Palmyrene language, which is allied to the Oriental dialects, there are some inscriptions remaining, in an unusual (peregrino) character of writing, and very obscure and difficult of interpretation.

#### CHAPTER III.

OF THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW TEXT, AND THE SOURCES OF ITS CRITICISM IN GENERAL.

# § 1.

It is necessary to the person who would apply criticism aright, where it is required in interpreting the Old Testament, that he be not altogether unacquainted with the history of the Hebrew text.

- Obs. 1. He who is very little aequainted with the history of the Hebrew text, can form no just judgment regarding the changes which may have been made on any passage either by various readings or by other means, or regarding the value of the various readings themselves; nor consequently exercise rightly or properly that criticism which is so often required of the interpreter of the Old Testament.
- Obs. 2. This history of the Hebrew text, of which we can only treat very slightly in these principles of interpretation, we shall distribute into different periods of time, that we may see by a just and natural order, what ought to be its form; and these periods shall be, 1st, from the beginning down to the Baby-

lonish captivity; 2nd, from thence to the time of our Saviour; 3d, from that age to the Masoretic revisal of the text, as it is termed; and the last, from that period to the present time.

## § 2.

The history of the text of the ancient sacred books before the Babylonish captivity, is, for the most part, obscure and uncertain, which, indeed, in a case of such remote antiquity, need excite no surprise.

- Obs. 1. The first sacred writings being attributed to Moses as their author, we must begin the history of the Hebrew text from his age. In the book of Genesis, indeed, things prior to his time are related: these, however, are reckoned, with a high degree of probability, to have come down to us as written by Moses; he having collected those ancient historical documents most nearly connected with his purpose, reduced them into order, and prefixed them to those things which, for the sake of religion, he delivered in writing to his countrymen.
- Obs. 2. Although in the present day there are not a few who do not acknowledge Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch, as we now have it, we cannot, however agree with such, their reasons not appearing to us satisfactory; and they themselves are obliged to confess that Moses at least gave in writing

some things to the Israelites relating to religion. We shall only refer to Exod. xxiv. 3, 4, 7; Deut. xxxi. 9—13.

Obs. 3. No one can with propriety doubt, that to the Mosaic writings some others were added before the Babylonish captivity. Such are some historical writings, many poems of David and other poets, and lastly, some writings of Solomon and the prophets: each of which, it is certain were accounted sacred by the Jews after the Babylonish captivity. We cannot, however, suppose that there is any one who calls to mind the rudeness of the nation, and the remoteness of the time, who will bring himself to believe, that no disarrangement or confusion took place in the collecting of all these writings, and especially of those which consisted of parts not strictly connected, such particularly as the book of Psalms.

Obs. 4. It is asked, in what manner were the sacred books collected and preserved before the Babylonish captivity? That this is even now doubtful, and can never be precisely ascertained, is what we do not deny; nor need we greatly wonder at this. For the subject is of the most remote antiquity; and we ought not to expect, from the ancient Hebrew nation, such particular accounts of things pertaining even to religion itself, as to leave nothing to be desired by posterity. Since therefore we must determine this question chiefly from the nature of the thing, and from the greater or less degree of probability, there seem to be three suppositions out of which we may choose; either that the sacred books were deposited in some public library; or were col-

lected and preserved solely by the care of the priests and Levites; or were dispersed through private libraries, and not collected into one volume till after the captivity. The last of these suppositions seems to be the least probable; although we can scarcely doubt, that certain historical relations, and some poems taken from the houses of private persons, were received. into the sacred code. Among the ancient Hebrew common people, there was little or no use of books, and private libraries were unknown among them; the most of them, even prior to the captivity, were by no means curious inquirers into things connected with religion, and most of the kings themselves, who, from the Mosaic precept, Deut. xvii. 18-20, were bound to have always with them a copy of the law for their own use, seem to have almost quite neglected this injunction, caring less for religion than they ought to have done. Nor can it, with any degree of probability, be shewn that there were private persons who carried with them into captivity, some, one part of the sacred writings, and others, other parts, which were afterwards collected into one volume. It may be assumed, with greater appearance of truth, that the sacred books were preserved by the priests and Levites, to whom, by Divine authority, the care of them and of sacred things in general, and the instruction of the people had been committed. Compare Deut. xvii. 18; xxxiii. 10. Neither does it seem unlikely, that some of these should possess a copy of certain books, particularly of those of Moses copied for the use of themselves and others. But there is no sufficient reason for believing that the sacred books were

preserved by them alone: and it seems more probable that some safe and proper public situation was assigned for the most important of these books, in which they might always remain. We may therefore safely determine that there was some sacred place, set apart for a library in some part of the sanctuary, which was committed to the care of the priests and Levites in which Moses first deposited his writings, and to which the other sacred books were afterwards added. If this be assumed, certain passages of Scripture will be better understood, such as the following, Deut. xvii. 18; xxxi. 9, 26; Jos. xxiv. 26; 1 Sam. x. 25. And thus from this sacred library the book of the law was to be taken every seventh year and read to the people publicly assembled. Deut. xxxi. 10—13.

Obs. 5. The copy of the Mosaic law, which is said to have been found in the temple of Solomon in the reign of Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 8; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, seems to have been the book written by the hand of Moses himself, which, to prevent its being lost, had been long before hid in some secret place of the temple. From this we may conclude, that even in the most corrupt times there were persons who bestowed that care in preserving the sacred books which was due to them. The more complete annals of the Jewish and Israelitic kings, often quoted in the books of Kings, seem not to have been preserved in the sacred library but in the royal palace; and it is probable that they were quite destroyed along with the monarchy. In what manner the books of the Old Testament were preserved safe from the destruction of the whole ancient state, we have no written ac-

count. Tradition bears that Jeremiah, before the burning of the temple, had removed the sacred books into some safe place; which indeed is highly probable. For Jeremiah certainly foresaw the destruction of the state, the captivity of the people and their return; and whatever related to religion was the object both of his care and affection. Nay, it seems by no means improbable, from Dan. ix. 2, that he had committed to Daniel the ancient sacred records, along with his own prophecies. The Jewish fable is undoubtedly most absurd, to which a reference appears in a book of no authority, the second of Esdras, chap, xiv. 21, &c., namely, that all the copies of the most ancient sacred books were burnt along with the temple of Solomon, or perished during the captivity, and were completely restored by Ezra, through the aid of the Holy Spirit, dictating to him the whole accurately.

Obs. 7. The sacred authors either committed their own compositions to writing, or dictated them to others. The first mention of an amanuensis occurs in Psalm xlv. 2, which poem seems to have David for its author; and it appears that Jeremiah employed Baruch for the same purpose. Jerem. xxxvi. 4, 32; xlv. 1. From the time of Moses, they were accustomed to employ sheets for writing upon, made of some durable material, which they stitched together when the writings were of any length. These were properly called rolls, מבלות. Psalm xl. 8. They used the same letters in writing as at present, though somewhat ruder in their form; and if any points were added, they were many fewer than those now

in use. See chap. i. § 2, Obs. 3—8. But as the sacred writings served only for public use, and no great attention was paid commonly to them, there was little necessity for multiplying copies.

Obs. 8. It is disputed, whether the Hebrews anciently left any space between their words in writing or not; as to this point, the arguments brought forward on both sides have considerable weight: for our part, we are of opinion that a certain space was interposed, very small, however, for the most part, and sometimes altogether neglected. Previous to the Babylonish captivity no trace appears of those sections into which purposely, and for religious use, the sacred books have been divided.

## § 3.

Regarding the text of the books of the Old Testament, from the Babylonish captivity to the Christian era, we know a little more; but still the accounts we have are only in part certain and probable.

Obs. 1. As most of the Jews, deeply affected by the destruction of their state, applied themselves with their whole souls to their religion, to which before they paid slight attention; from this change of mind we are naturally led to conclude that they devoted much more care to their sacred books than ever they had done before. It is not, however, to be supposed

that private individuals, in the time of the captivity. preserved safe from destruction the more ancient of the sacred writings, and those which were successive. ly added to them. For the circumstances of the times did not permit private persons to collect books or to possess libraries: and, besides, it was a matter of too much importance to allow of its being left to the care and inclination of the people at large. But the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel being among them, either took upon themselves the charge of this business, or committed it to some of the principal persons of the order of the priests: and God, who, as appears from the book of Daniel, frequently interfered for the sake of religion in an extraordinary manner, seems to have arranged it that there should be men so distinguished by their religion, as that this care of the sacred books might be safely committed to them.

Obs. 2. After their restoration to their country, according to a celebrated tradition of the Jews, there was assembled at Jerusalem a senate, generally called by the name of the Great Synagogue, instituted by Ezra, and composed of one hundred and twenty members, to whom was committed the care both of civil and sacred matters, but peculiarly of the sacred books, and whose president Ezra was, although afterwards Nehemiah took a great share in its proceedings. The manner in which the Jews have dressed up this tradition is no doubt fabulous; but it may be allowed, with much appearance of probability, that there is some truth at bottom in it. We can scarcely, indeed, doubt that Ezra, whose ardour in restoring the Jewish state is so well known, bestowed peculiar care in col-

lecting the sacred books, and arranging them for the use of the people. He seems to have employed himself first on the Mosaic books, which were principally necessary to their religion, and which had the first place in the new library; to these, through the assistance of Nehemiah, he added the other books in succession, 2 Maccab. ii. 13; so that all the sacred books, and such as in process of time were added to them, were, from the very first, deposited in the new temple. Nor is it at all improbable that Ezra assumed to himself colleagues from among those of highest rank and most experience among the people to assist him in his very difficult task of restoring the whole affairs of the state: such a council, assembled afterwards as occasion required, may perhaps be referred to in 1 Maccab. vii. 12, under the title of the Synagogue of the Scribes, συναγωγης γεαμματεων. Nor, finally, is it, as we think, unlikely that, by the authority and example of Ezra, the sacred books now began to be written in a more elegant character, as we have already hinted above, chap. i. § 2, obs. 3. proved the cause of the ancient copies by degrees being disused and finally perishing.

Cbs. 3. In this edition of the sacred books we have no reason to doubt that every care was employed which the dignity of the subject required, and human prudence and diligence was equal to; and that the copies of the writings, particularly of those of Moses, which might be in the possession of the priests, were consulted. And we shall form no rash opinion, if we suppose that it was not merely by chance, nor without design, that the different writings were arranged in a certain or-

der; although it was not attempted to change, into any more satisfactory and consistent order, that confused arrangement observable in some books, particularly in the Psalms, which took place partly before the destruction of their state, and partly during that calamity and their subsequent captivity; to remedy which, indeed, at that period, the utmost industry was altogether unequal.

Obs. 4. As soon as there was a fit place in the new temple, the sacred library spoken of in 2 Maccab. ii. 13, seems to have been placed there; and into it were brought both those writings which survived the destruction of the original state, and likewise those which had been composed by inspired men in the time of the captivity, and during a short period after the return into their own land. Besides, there were likewise other writings of a religious nature added, composed some of them a shorter and others a longer time after the return from captivity; and there are even some hymns in the book of Psalms whose authors lived as late as the time of the Maccabees.

Obs. 5. After the return of the Jewish captives, synagogues being established in foreign countries as well as in their native land, in which the Scriptures were read and explained, occasioned copies of them to be more and more multiplied; and at the same time the attachment of the greater part of them to their religion being increased, had such an effect, that neither the vicissitudes and misfortunes to which, in the course of time, they were subjected, nor even the direful persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, could effect the destruction of their

sacred books; but greater and greater care was every day bestowed in making those copies of them which might be required.

- Obs. 6. It is probable that the copy of the Scriptures which was kept in the temple after it was rebuilt, perished at the time when Antiochus Epiphanes spoiled the temple. For at that period all public worship of God ceased, and whatever copies of the divine laws were discovered were torn and burnt, I Maccab. i. 56, 57. But not long after, the sacred volume seems to have been restored, and written out with the utmost care from the other copies which remained, at the time when the temple was purified, and every thing relating to the divine worship restored anew. This new edition, containing some additional poetical compositions, it is probable remained in the temple until, on the destruction of that edifice by the Romans, it was carried to Rome, and there borne in triumph along with the other sacred spoils by Titus; Joseph. Jewish War, book vii. 5. 5. At last, however, it was given to Flavius Josephus at his own request. as he himself testifies in his account of his own life, § 75: as to what became of it afterwards no probable conjecture can be formed.
- Obs. 7. A general division of the sacred volume, when read publicly, was made, into the Law, the Prophets, and the remaining books; which division perhaps existed before the institution of synagogues. Under the title of the Law were comprehended the books of Moses. Not only were the prophetical writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the lesser prophets, as we call them, styled the Prophets, but

likewise the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which the Jews considered to be written by prophets; and these, from their priority in point of time, were generally called the former prophets. Lastly, they designated the remaining books by the general name of כתובים, or Writings, meaning sacred writings: and as the Psalms were placed at the head of these, they bore this latter title in the time of our Saviour, Luke xxiv. 44. The Jews place the book of Daniel in this last division, and not among the prophetical writings, because he had not exercised the office of a prophet in his native country, but among foreigners, and had led a more splendid life than was usual with the prophets, in the court of the Babylonish king. Of this last class, the five books of Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, afterwards read on certain festival days, and which were often comprehended in a separate book, went under the name of בובלות, or Rolls ( Volumes ): this distinction, however, took place in later times.

Obs. 8. In progress of time, a division of the Mosaic books took place into Paraschæ or sections, which were read each Sabbath day, by which means the whole books were read over in regular order every year. The Jews afterwards divided what they called the Prophets likewise into sections, for the purpose of their sacred readings, and these they called Haphtaræ.

Obs. 9. Lastly, Although the Alexandrian Greek version made and used for the promotion of religion, was in time more and more received into many synagogues, it is not to be imagined that it altogether, and

everywhere, abolished the use of the Hebrew text. There is, indeed, scarcely any just reason for doubting that the text written in Hebrew was sacredly preserved in those very places where the Greek version was used; and that it was read first, along with that translation. But the disuse of the Hebrew language, which was the original cause of framing the Greek version, increasing every day, could not but produce some errors in copying the Hebrew text, when this was required to be done.

#### § 4.

From the Christian era, and even previous to the Masoretic edition of the Old Testament, the history of these books becomes better known, from the peculiar attention paid to them both by the Jews and the more learned among the Christians.

Obs. 1. From the second century of the Christian era, when the Jews were obliged to dispute with the Christians, they saw the necessity of a more accurate study of the sacred books in their original language. That they might the better defend their own cause, they determined to employ, not the Greek version, but the Hebrew text, as those who disputed with them argued from the Greek. They applied themselves, therefore, to the constant reading of the He-

brew, and gave themselves wholly up to this study. Nay, in order to derive more correctly their arguments from it, they studied it critically, as far as that age, and their own genius, which was neither well cultivated, nor of a liberal nature, would allow; they collated the different manuscripts of the sacred text, and endeavoured to correct it where any mistake seemed to have been committed.

Obs. 2. At this period the history of the Hebrew text was particularly illustrated by the labours of two learned men, who were Fathers, as they are called, of the Christian church; the one of whom, Origen, was a Greek, and the other, Jerome, was a Latin.

Origen, who flourished about the middle of the third century, executed a work of immense labour, which he entitled Hexapla, (hexapla biblia): which, however, as it is more connected with the criticism of the Greek version than of the Hebrew text, will be treated of more fully afterwards. But it deserves to be noticed here, that the Hebrew text was given by Origen in his Hexapla, not only in Hebrew but also in Greek characters: and it appears from the fragments of the work which have been discovered, that the text afterwards established by the Masorites, had, even at that time, been, for the most part, received as the best.

Jerome, about the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, by giving the most sedulous attention to the study of the Hebrew scriptures, no less distinguished himself by his critical labours on the Old Testament. Before restoring and correcting the Latin version called the Italic, he deemed it necessary

accurately to collate the Hebrew copies, and to satisfy himself of the true reading of the text; and he afterwards executed from the Hebrew text itself a new Latin translation. As more will be said on this subject afterwards, it is sufficient to remark here, that the Hebrew copy which Jerome used, contained all the books of the Old Testament nearly in the same order as they are found in the ordinary editions; that there was in it a division of the chapters and verses not quite the same as that used by the present Jews; and that the Hebrew text of that age differed little from the present Masoretic editions.

## § 5.

The history of the Hebrew text is particularly deserving of attention from the age of the Masorites down to our times.

Obs. 1. Under the term Masora the Jews comprehend generally the traditions received from their ancestors, but particularly the collection of critical observations which Ezra himself, the president of the great Synagogue, and his colleagues in that council, began; and which the doctors who succeeded them enriched from time to time by new additions having always in view to determine the correctness of the various readings, by this rule of faithful and ascertained tradition, and to correct whatever errors might have crept into the text.

Obs. 2. Although the truth of this Jewish account of the Masora may be with propriety rejected; one thing may yet be accounted probable, that even from the second century after Christ, some observations were begun to be made, having respect to the text of the Old Testament, which, in process of time, were more and more angmented, till they increased to a volume, known by the name of the Masora: and that these were collected in the beginning of the fourth century, by the Jews of the College of Tiberias, a very celebrated city of ancient Galilee, and frequented above all others by the Jews after Jerusalem was overthrown. This collection was continued downwards, and received signal additions till about the middle of the eleventh century, when it was almost completed by the labour of two men most celebrated in the history of the Hebrew text; the one of whom, Ben Asher, head of the College of Tiberias, and the other, Ben Naphthali, chief of the College of Babylon, laboured, through the aid of the Masora, to render the sacred volume as correct as possible.

Obs. 3. The labour of the Masorites was directed to determining the whole arrangement of the text, and the marking of the points, such as we have them in the Hebrew Bibles of the present day, as well as to correcting the text, to which, as to a perfect model, all future copies might be conformed. To this it is owing that the ancient manuscripts by degrees perished, as being considered of no value; so that if not all, by far the greater part at least, of the most ancient codices are not of an older date than eight hundred years. To this labour of the Masorites are also due

some annotations, partly critical, inserted in the margin, while others of them have a reference rather to Rabbinical trifles. The number of the verses too, and of the smaller sections of whatever sort, occurring in each book, was reckoned up by them; but in this computation we find some diversity in various places, as these divisions were not all of the same magnitude in all the manuscripts.

Obs. 4. After the Masoretic revisal was finally and unchangeably settled, and before the invention of the art of printing, the present received distinction of chapters took place. It is with sufficient probability ascribed to Cardinal Hugo de St. Caro, who lived in the thirteenth century: and it seems to have been an invention of the Scholastics, who, that they might the more easily quote the places of sacred Scripture which they employed in their disputes, divided by the instrumentality of Hugo, the Latin vulgate, into chapters. This division being very useful, was by degrees received even by the Jews themselves. But in what way the present division into verses found its way into the Hebrew Bibles, it is impossible to say with any certainty. The general arrangement of all the sacred books, agreeably to the ancient division into the Law, the Prophets, and the other writers, pointed out above in § 3. Obs. 7, has been invariably observed among the Jews; although a particular division of some books, by which two are made out of one, has begun to prevail among them in later times.

a Hugo de St. Caro, or St. Cher, was the first who composed a concordance, which could not have been made without some such contrivance.—Tr.

Obs. 5. When the art of printing was invented in the 15th century, the Jews began to give printed editions of the whole, and of parts of their sacred volume, conformable to their manuscript text. years 1525 and 1526, the Rabbinical Bible, under the care of R. Jacob. Ben Chajim, and at the instance of that most excellent printer, D. Bomberg, appeared at Venice; and such was the care employed by the editor in conforming the Hebrew text to the Masoretic precepts, that this edition obtained the highest character for correctness among the Jews; and almost all the Christians too, who afterwards published new editions, considered it to be their duty to follow it closely as their most faithful guide; so that it is by no means wonderful that the later editions should so nearly agree with each other.

Obs. 6. In consequence of this close agreement of the editions, it happened that for a long time most men were of opinion that any application of criticism to the correction of the text was useless, neither did any one think of comparing the different manuscripts. By degrees, however, this collation was begun; and, in the year 1720, J. H. Michaelis published at Halle the Hebrew Bible, with select various readings. These, however, had respect chiefly to certain vowel or other points; while the greater variations which were discovered were accounted errors of the transcribers. Charles Frid. Houbigant was the first who added, for the purposes of criticism, the various readings extracted from the manuscripts in the King of France's library, and published them along with his Bible in 1753. But Kennicot is deservedly reckoned the restorer of the application of genuine criticism to the Old Testament. For, excited by the example of his countryman Mill, who had edited the New Testament with various readings, and strongly urged by the advice of others, particularly of the highly celebrated Lowth, he undertook, and, aided by the help of many, completed in twenty years a noble work, in which he proposed to compare all the manuscripts, and some ancient editions, which were to be found in his own country of England, and elsewhere: and these various readings, as far as concerned the letters only, he noted and added to his Bible, published in 1776 and 1780. Emulous of this praiseworthy design, De Rossi, a most laborious Italian, instituted a more extensive collation of manuscripts, and published in 1784-1788, the various readings he had collected; marking also the variations observed in the vowels, (viz. the vowel points,) which he considered most worthy of notice; to which he occasionally added his own critical opinion, taking to his aid the authority of the ancient versions. To this work he finally added a supplement in 1798.

### § 6.

Besides the history of the Hebrew text, it is required of the accomplished interpreter of the Old Testament, to have a knowledge of those aids which he may employ in the exercise of criticism.

Obs. 2. In as far as the Masora relates to the criticism of the Old Testament, in so far is it of some assistance in this respect; for it contains diverse observations begun a long time ago to be collected, principally from the more ancient manuscripts; and consequently has true various readings, which are more ancient than all the manuscripts yet discovered or collated.

means to be despised.

Obs. 3. The Pentateuch, written in Samaritan characters, but in the Hebrew language, is of the highest value in the criticism of the Mosaic books. The first copy of this book was brought into Europe by the celebrated traveller *Pietro della Valle*, who, in the

year 1616, had purchased it from the Samaritans at Damascus. Other copies, however, were afterwards brought into Europe. We have no certain account of the origin of this Pentateuch, of which we find frequent mention made by some doctors of the ancient Christian church, as well as by Fl. Josephus. Some Samaritans say, that it is as old as the thirteenth year after the occupation of Palestine by the Israelites: but this tradition is in no degree probable. Some are of opinion that we must seek for the origin of the Samaritan Pentateuch in the time when the kingdom of Israel was separated from that of Judah: if it be indeed possible, that in the midst of their perverse idolatrous worship the Mosaic constitution could be preserved, and that priests and Levites were found among them. But, after that kingdom was destroyed, as nothing but the dregs of the people were left, it is by no means likely that, among such men, a copy of the Mosaic law would be preserved and transmitted to the Samaritans, who were made up of the mixed multitude of their descendants and of foreign colonists. Neither is their opinion satisfactory, who hold that after the termination of the Jewish captivity the Samaritans obtained their Pentateuch. For no one can persuade us that from the Jews, whom from the moment of their return to their country they began to hate in the most violent manner, they received their sacred books at any time of that later period of their history. No more probable time then can be assigned in history for the origin of this Pentateuch, than that in which an Israelitish priest was sent by the King of the Assyrians to instruct the Israelites in the manner in which the God of the Israelitish country ought to be worshipped. 2 Kings xvii. 25—28. For this purpose, if the object of the king was to be accomplished, a copy of the Divine laws was necessary. It is not surprising therefore that the Samaritans had only the Pentateuch: for the double book of Joshua which they possess, is written in the Arabic language, and contains some annals, beginning from Joshua and continued downwards by various writers.

The age of the manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch which have been brought into Europe, although not as yet absolutely fixed, seems, however, to be of great antiquity; and nothing is found in them conformed to the Masoretie edition of the Jewish Pentateuch. For they have neither vowel points, nor diacritic marks to the consonants, nor accents; but they have certain marks peculiar to themselves, as, when they separate single words by a point or line; or when any diversity of pronunciation, and of signification arising therefrom, is indicated, as it frequently is, by some mark. The Samaritan Pentateuch is besides divided into sections, which are different from the Jewish. That it is highly useful to the criticism of the Mosaic books must be apparent to every one. It is indeed less accurately transcribed than the Masoretic edition of the Jews, but is far more ancient. It has also many errors, arising from the confusion and transposition of letters, from the omission and addition of whole words, and from marginal glosses; nay even some parts seem to have

been changed intentionally. But it contains, nevertheless, not a few genuine various readings, which deserve to be preferred to the Masoretic readings.

Obs. 4. Among the critical helps, of which we are treating, the ancient versions are universally allowed to hold a primary place, as part of them are of great antiquity and made from ancient manuscripts; so that, in very many places, the true reading may be more felicitously restored from them than from the Hebrew manuscripts yet extant, or from the Masora of the Jews. Of these translations, however, we shall treat in a separate chapter.

Obs. 5. Parallel passages are also a source of this sacred criticism. For there are not a few passages of the Old Testament, some of them longer and some shorter, which occur twice; such as genealogical tables, certain historical narrations, laws, moral maxims, some poems, and certain annunciations of the prophets. There are also passages either repeated by the authors themselves with some variation, or adapted afterwards by others, with some changes, to their own use or that of their cotemporaries. We are not, however, to attribute to these causes all the diversities we find in such parallel passages; for not a few of them must be attributed to error, which may be detected and corrected by comparing them.

Obs. 6. Neither ought we, in the list of aids to the criticism of the Old Testament, to pass over without notice the writers of the New Testament, who have quoted many passages, either wholly or in part, from the ancient sacred records. They are in fact of the

highest antiquity and authority, and in some passages may be employed either in establishing or changing the received reading. It is not, however, to be denied, that they have often only expressed the sense, not adhering closely to the words, and have even not unfrequently used the Alexandrine version.

Obs. 7. Among these critical aids, the Talmud and the other Jewish writings are commonly reckoned. The authors of the Talmud lived previous to the fixing of the text of the sacred books by the Masorites, and quoted numberless places of the Old Testament. There have consequently been persons who recommended the collecting from thence various readings, and some have collected them. But it may be justly affirmed that little advantage has accrued from this; and still less, and almost none, can be derived from the consultation of the Rabbinical writers, who are more recent than even the Talmud. What critical aid may be derived from Fl. Josephus and Philo Judæus, who lived about the times of Christ and his Apostles, in amending the text of the Old Testament, has principally a reference to the Alexandrine Greek version which it appears that they used. But as in some places Josephus seems to have consulted the Hebrew text, he may in such cases supply some various readings.

Obs. 8. But as there are many cases in which authoritative aids fail us, we must then have recourse to critical conjectures. In writing out copies of every kind of books errors are inevitable: and the older the books, and the more frequently they have been copied, every one must allow that there must be the more

errors found in them. But the most of the books of the Old Testament are by far the most ancient existing, and have been frequently copied, at least since the Babylonish captivity and the return of the Jews to their country. The translations of them were made long after the time of writing even the most recent of these books; and the manuscript copies of them which remain are of a much later date than the translations. And since the transcribers, without perpetual miracles quite unworthy of God, could not have been preserved, in spite of every diligence on their own part, from falling occasionally into error: it from hence appears, that there are mistakes in these books requiring to be rectified by conjectural emendation.

### CHAPTER IV.

OF THE ANCIENT INTERPRETERS.

### § 1.

Since from the ancient interpreters we derive some aid to the understanding of the Old Testament, but chiefly to the criticism of that sacred volume, it is necessary that we set before the reader, what is most worthy of being known regarding them.

Obs. 1. As, occasionally, certain passages occurring in the more ancient writings of the Old Testament,

are explained in those of a later date of the same volume; the authors of these last may, in some respect, be accounted the interpreters of the former. In Nehem. ix. 21, the expressions in Deuter. viii. 4; xxix. 4, 5, are so quoted, that it is easy to see in what sense they ought to be understood. The uncertain author of the lxxxix Psalm, vers. 20—38, explains in a poetical manner, the divine promise made to David, 2 Sam. vii. 14—16. David in Ps. lxxii. 17, has in his eye the divine oracle given to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, and xxii. 18, and in no small degree defines its meaning. And, to say no more on this head, there are not wanting more recent prophecies, by which some of the more ancient are extended and illustrated.

Obs. 2. Among the ancient interpreters of the Old Testament, may be reckoned, in many passages, the writers of the New. For, not only are many places quoted by them, but also explained. And as they were of the nation of the Jews, well acquainted with Jewish affairs, and armed with divine authority, we cannot think lightly of their capability of interpreting the Old Testament. What their value in a critical point of view is, we have seen in the former chapter, § 6. Obs. 6.

Obs. 3. In the number of the interpreters of the Old Testament, may be reckoned Philo Judæus, Flav. Josephus, and the Talmudic writers; the use of whom in criticism, we have already noticed in chap. iii. § 6. Obs. 7. The interpretations of Philo are generally of the allegorical sort; Josephus is a more valuable expositor, and very frequently is useful for enabling us to understand more clearly the historical

events. The Talmudic writers are much less valuable to the interpreter of the Old than of the New Testament, as they frequently intrude the manners, institutions, and even the fables of later times into the Old Testament.

Obs. 4. But in common language we mean by the ancient interpreters, those who turned the books of the Old Testament into other languages. These then of whom we now mean to speak exclusively, we have already stated, (chap. i. § 5. Obs. 4.) to be of some use in the interpretation of the Old Testament. Their principal utility, however, is in criticism; and we have seen in the former chapter, § 6. Obs. 4, that they hold the first place among the critical aids.

### § 2.

Of all the versions of the Old Testament, the Alexandrine Greek is the most ancient; and to this others also in the Greek language were afterwards added.

Obs. 1. The history by Aristeas of the origin of this most ancient Greek version, subjoined to some copies of the works of Josephus, and also edited separately, is deserving of notice; of which account we subjoin a summary.—Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, wishing to enrich his library at Alexandria with books collected from all quarters, Demetrius Phalereus, his Librarian, advised him to cause the

book which contained the laws of the Jews, and which he understood to be highly worthy of perusal, to be translated into the Greek language. Accordingly the king sent Aristeas his minister, and also Andrew, a distinguished person, with splendid presents to Eleazar, the priest of the Jews, from whom he requested a copy of the law, and well qualified translators. Their request was readily complied with, and seventy-two men, being six from each of the tribes, all well skilled in Hebrew and Greek, and venerable, both from their character and age, together with a copy of the Mosaic books, written in golden letters, were sent with them. When these translators arrived at Alexandria, they were most honourably received by the king. Being then taken to the neighbouring island of Pharos, and lodged in a splendid mansion; in the space of seventy-two days, they, by mutually assisting each other, accomplished the translation, which, as the work proceeded, they dictated to Demetrius. When he had read over the whole translation to an assembly of Jews, composed of priests and other learned men, who gave it the highest praises, he then placed it in the royal library.

Obs. 2. Josephus in his Antiquities, xii. 2, agrees with this relation of Aristeas, from which in some points Philo Judæus dissents. In the second book of his "Life of Moses," about the middle, he narrates that, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus, some learned Jews were sent from Palestine to Alexandria by the High Priest, to translate the Mosaic books into Greek, and that they were taken to the isle of Pharos, where, apart from each other, they translated

these books, but exactly in the same manner, and as it were by divine inspiration. Justin Martyr goes farther, and in his Exhort. to the Greeks, sect. 13, pretends, that each of the seventy translators, shut up in as many separate cells, and prevented from mutual intercourse, executed their version in such a mauner as not only in every instance to express the same sense, but even used the same words, and did not differ even in one syllable: and of all this he professes himself fully persuaded, from his having seen the remains of their cells. Epiphanius, however, in his book On Weights and Measures, sect. 3 and 6, mentions only thirty-six cells, having in each two translators, who, shut up from dawn to the evening, translated in order, each of the books of the Old Testament, so as that there was not the slightest difference to be found in the thirty-six versions, and therefore in this astonishing harmony, we must acknowledge a singular miracle of divine providence.

Obs. 3. The Samaritans contend with the Jews for this honour of turning the Pentateuch into the Greek language. They assert that the king Ptolemy Philadelphus, excited by the opportunity, afforded by the controversy existing between the Jews and Samaritans regarding the sacred books, to desire a translation by each party separately of their copy of the law into Greek, gave the preference to that which was executed from the Samaritan text. This tradition of theirs is extant in a chronicle of the Samaritans, written in Arabic, by Abu' L Phatach.<sup>a</sup>

a Neues Repertor, von Paulus, für bibl, und morgenl. Litterat. T. i. p. 124-126.

- Obs. 4. As then, the history of the Alexandrian version into the Greek is involved in fables and obscured by tradition, let us try whether we can determine any thing probable regarding its origin.
- 1. All antiquity is agreed that the Hebrew Pentateuch was translated at Alexandria into the Greek language. The origin of this version, however, seems to be due to the Jews. For there were many of that nation in Egypt, where they also had synagogues, in which the Mosaic books were read: and as the Hebrew language there went more and more into disuse, while the Greek succeeded to its place, it is probable that some of the leading and more learned Jews in Egypt, were the original authors of making a Greek version of those books for common and public use.
- 2. As it appears partly from Ælian (Var. Hist. iii. 17), and partly from Plutarch (a Opp. T. ii. p. 189, D.), that Demetrius Phalereus was appointed by Ptolemy Soter in Egypt to preside over the drawing up a code of laws, and had advised him to get and collect books which treated of political subjects, in which doctrines are laid down which to kings even their own friends dare not mention: and as Diogenes Laertius (Lib. v. Sect. 78), relates that Demetrius resided for a long time with Ptolemy Soter, but was banished by his son and successor Philadelphus: it is probable, that Soter having heard through Demetrius the rumour of the Jews being employed on making a version of their laws, had asked for a copy of it as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> Such is the absurd mode of quoting in several places in the original—no mention being made of the edition referred to.—Tr.

soon as it should be ready, and had thus hastened the work; but that only Philadelphus had at last obtained a copy, and placed it in the Alexandrine library, it not having been finished till he came to the throne.

- 3. There seems to have been only one translator of the Pentateuch. But it is not improbable that his version was approved by an assembly of the principal and learned men convened for examining it, before it was appointed for religious use, or a copy of it given to Ptolemy Philadelphus.
- 4. No credit seems due to the tradition of the Samaritans. For it is not possible to conceive that the Jews, actuated by the inveterate hatred which they had towards the Samaritans, would have received a version made by them so honourably, as to have used it in their synagogues. There have indeed been some philologers, who, induced by the near agreement between the Greek version and the Samaritan Pentateuch, have believed that tradition. But this agreement ought rather perhaps to be explained in this way; that the Hebrew text, which the Alexandrian Jews used, was, from whatever cause, more conformable to the Samaritan text, than all the Hebrew manuscripts with which we are yet acquainted.
- Obs. 5. Tychseu<sup>a</sup> is peculiar in his opinion, in imagining that the Alexandrine translators, as they are called, did not translate the Hebrew writings into Greek, but only transcribed them into Greek letters, and that from this copy some Jews, either of Alexan-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> In his "Tentamen de variis Codd. V. Test. generibus." Rostoch. A. 1772, p. 54, &c.

dria, or of some other country, afterwards executed the Greek version. There are no reasons of weight which give any countenance to this opinion.

Obs. 6. Neither does that seem admissible which is related by Aristobulus, an Alexandrian Jew and Peripatetic philosopher, who is supposed to have flourished about 175 years before Christ. He says, that before the Alexandrian version was made, another Greek version existed, from which the Greek philosophers, but especially Plato, extracted many things for their own use. We have his words in Clemens Alexandrinus (Strom. L. i. p. 342), and in Eusebius (Prapar. Evang. p. 663, 664). But no considerate person will allow himself to be persuaded by the very slight authority of Aristobulus, to believe that there was any Greek version anterior to the very celebrated Alexandrine.

Obs. 7. There is no doubt, but that at first the Pentateuch only was translated into Greek; as the Mosaic books were principally used by the common people. But in process of time the other books were also translated by various persons, as seems manifest from the difference of style; and from no obscure indications, is it likewise deduced that the whole was translated in Egypt. The translation of all the books of the Old Testament, seems to have been finally completed in the second century before Christ.

Obs. 8. One thing is common to all the Alexandrine translators, that they employ a style which is not pure Greek, but such as we might expect from Jews, and approaching nearly to the Hebrew manner of speaking. Most of them adhere closely to the very

words of the original. Some few of them have attained to no mean degree of excellence; among whom the translator of the Pentateuch deserves the first place. The Alexandrine version of Daniel being thought to differ too much from the Hebrew text, and being generally little esteemed, that of Theodotion, of which we shall speak afterwards, was early substituted in its room by the Christian church; and, in consequence, has been adopted in all the editions. The more ancient version, however, was at last rescued from oblivion in the last century, and has been more than once published by itself.

Obs. 9. The Alexandrine version having been in common use among the Jews, not only in Egypt, but afterwards in Palestine, and in those other countries where the Greek language principally prevailed, and consequently often transcribed; and having been received by many Christians of the first ages; numerous errors crept into it. By the Christian copiers, in particular, it was for the most part transcribed very negligently, and in many places, through their rash critical attempts, was perverted and corrupted.

Obs. 10. To remedy this evil, Origen proposed to compare the Alexandrine version with the Hebrew text, and with the other Greek versions, to which he could have access, and by the aid and proper employment of these versions to form a new edition. For this purpose, he travelled over the whole East, and applied himself to this most laborious occupation for twenty-eight years, being surnamed Adamantius by the ancients, from his uncommon hardness or strength in enduring such toil. He seems to have first pub-

lished his *Tetrapla*, in which work he transcribed in four columns the Alexandrine version, and that of the three later translators, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. But afterwards in a more enlarged edition he added the Hebrew text, written both in Hebrew and Greek letters; and as this noble work consisted of six columns, he gave it the name of *Hexapla*. In it too he laboured to correct the Alexandrine version by the Hebrew text, adding diverse marks to shew where the one seemed to differ from the other, and at the same time comparing with these some other Greek versions.

This work, which was completed about the middle of the third century, and consisted of nearly fifty volumes, does not seem, on account of its great magnitude, to have been ever wholly copied by any one. Some time after the death of its author it was carried to Cesarea, where it was preserved in the library of Pamphilus, and perished, as it is thought, along with that library when the city was taken and plundered by the Saracens, in the 653d year of the Christian era.

Posterity, however, was not altogether deprived of the benefit of that incomparable work. For, in the beginning of the fourth century, Eusebius and Pamphilus, edited by itself, the text of the Alexandrine version, as it has been settled by Origen in his Hexapla, and added in some places certain variations of the other versions, and likewise the scholia of Origen. This epitome, as it were, of that immense work, having been often afterwards transcribed, sustained very great injury through the negligence of the copiers, and the audacity and rashness of some of them adding some things, and suppressing others. In later times, there have been men also, who have laboured to restore, in some degree, the Hexapla itself, or at least to collect its fragments wherever they could be found. The first who employed themselves in this task, were Flaminius Nobilis, in the sixteenth century, or, as some think, Peter Morinus, under this assumed name, and John Drusius; by the aid of whose labours, and from other sources, Bernard de Montfaucon edited his Hexapla, in the year 1714.

Obs. 11. Besides Origen, there were others of the ancients who employed themselves in amending, in some degree, the text of the Alexandrine version; in which attempt, Lucian of Antioch, and Hesychius in Egypt, distinguished themselves. And it is from their editions, and that of Eusebius and Pamphilus, taken from the Hexapla, that all the manuscripts of this formerly much used version, which have come down to our times, and from the chief of which the various printed editions have been formed, were originally derived. In the present century, or in the end of the last, Robert Holmes in England, caused all the copies of that version which were in Europe to be collated; and from these, and likewise from the writings of the fathers, he collected the various readings, which he intended to print along with the text of the Greek version. This work, published in part by the author himself, has been begun to be continued since his death.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> It is now completed.—Tr.

- Obs. 12. After this most ancient, and most generally received Alexandrine version, there were other Greek versions of the Hebrew sacred volume made, regarding which we shall briefly notice what seems principally deserving attention.
- 1. At what time the translation by Aquila appeared, is uncertain, but it is most probable that it was published before the year of our Lord 130. That opinion which seems nearest to truth, makes him a Jew of Pontus, and his object in making a new translation to have been, that he might enable the Jews who used the Greek language to dispute with more advantage against the Christians, than they could do from the Alexandrine version. With the greatest and almost anxious care, therefore, he endeavoured to express the force and particular meaning of the words; and afterwards in a new edition, he conformed his version even more to the Hebrew idiom, so as by having no regard to the genius of the Greek language, to show himself singularly tenacious of his purpose. On this account, such fragments of his version as have been discovered, are highly useful to the critical emendation of the Hebrew text.
- 2. Theodotion seems to have been of Ephesus, and an Ebionite, or Christian addicted to the Jewish rites, and to have made his version about the middle of the second century; and being partly attached to the views of the Jews, and partly to those of the Christians, he wished to adapt his version to the use of both in their mutual disputes, by conforming the Alexandrine translation as much as he could to an agreement with the Hebrew text. He therefore fol-

lowed it as far as the nature of his undertaking would allow, taking away what was redundant, adding what was wanting, and endeavouring to express more correctly what he considered to be improperly rendered. Hence it was, that Origen not only corrected the Alexandrine version from his; but likewise, that the translation of Daniel which he gave, was universally received in the Greek church, as being more conformable to the Hebrew text, than the Alexandrine.

- 3. Symmachus, likewise an Ebionite, is said to have been of the Samaritan nation, but to have become a Jewish proselyte. He certainly seems to have made his version not long after Theodotion, with the view of furnishing a translation of the sacred volume, more correct and more agreeable to the idiom of the Greek language, than any which had yet been published. With this view also, he endeavoured by subsequent corrections, to render his version more deserving of the praise of purity and elegance.
  - 4. Origen discovered three other versions of some of the books of the Old Testament, of uncertain dates and authors, which he employed in his critical labours, as he saw occasion. Fragments, too, of some other versions, remain, written on the margin of manuscripts.
  - 5. There is a later version, by an unknown Greek author, which, from the impurity of the style, though not altogether barbarous, and from its close conformity to the Masoretic edition, may, with much probability, be supposed to have been made between the eighth and ninth centuries. It follows, with singular and scrupulous solicitude, the Hebrew text; and its

manuscript, which contains the Pentateuch, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Daniel, copied very inaccurately from a more ancient manuscript, was discovered in the Library of St. Mark at Venice. The whole Pentateuch was published in this version about the end of last century by Ammon; and select parts of the Pentateuch, and of the other books, were edited a little before by Villoison.

## § 3.

To a much later age than the Alexandrine version, belong the Chaldaic translations or paraphrases, of most of the books of the Old Testament, made by the Jews. There has been also lately discovered, a Hebrew translation of the Chaldaic portions of Daniel and Ezra.

Obs. 1. The name Targum הרבום, derived from the Aramæan word הרבום, to interpret, signifies interpretation, explanation; but is chiefly employed by the Jews, and after their example, by the Christians, to denote the Chaldee translations of the Old Testament. These are commonly called Paraphrases, as they, for the most part, follow the paraphrastical mode of translating. All the versions of this kind which have been found, are only of some part of the Old Testament, and there is none of them which embraces the whole volume. Neither is there any Chaldee

translation known of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel.

Obs. 2. The most ancient version of the Pentateuch, which is ascribed to Onkelos, as its author, is the best of them all. Respecting the time in which he lived, there are different opinions; that, however, which makes him to have flourished in Babylon, a little before the birth of Christ, is the most to be approved. The very genius of the translation proves it to be of this ancient date; for it is very near to the Hebrew text, is throughout very simple, and differs little in purity of language, from those parts of the books of Daniel and Ezra, which are written in Chaldee. Jonathan, who translated all the books called the Prophets by the Jews, is said to have been contemporary with Onkelos. It is certain that he resided in Palestine; but, it seems probable, that he was not anterior to the second or third century of the Christian era. His style is less pure, and more paraphrastical, and he introduces now and then Rabbinical fables. There is, besides, a version of the Pentateuch, improperly ascribed by the later Jews to this Jonathan; for its style is still more impure, it contains a great number of foreign words and Rabbinical fictions, and among other more recent circumstances, it makes mention of the Mischna, Exod. xxiv. 9; and of Lombardy and Constantinople, Numb. xxiv. 24. It is therefore with probability, supposed to have been executed in the seventh or eighth century of our era.

From this version of the Pentateuch, the paraphrase, commonly called the *Jerusalem Targum*, has certain passages which are seemingly excerpts: for

this Targum is a compilation from the fictitious Jonathan, and likewise from the translations of other authors, made without any judgment, and in a late age; and it is not complete, but blanks occur in many There seems also to have been a Jerusalem Targum of the prophets, a fragment of which has been discovered on the margin of a manuscript at Zachar. xii. 10.2 Finally, an uncertain tradition informs us that a paraphrase of the rest of the writings of the Old Testament, or the Hagiographa, was made by one Joseph surnamed the Blind, and who lived in Babylon about the year of our Lord 322. But whatever Chaldaic interpretations of these books have been discovered are of a later age, and not the work of one author. That which embraces the Psalms, is derived from various sources. Not uncommonly two paraphrases of the book of Job are conjoined. The interpreter of the Proverbs seems to have followed the text of the Syriac version. The most probable opinion, with regard to the books of Chronicles, is, that they were not translated into the Chaldaic language before the eleventh century: for the translation of these books is full of errors and fables, and its author seems to have frequently made use of the Jerusalem Targum in his undertaking. Of the five books which are conjunctly denominated by the Jews Megilloth, as we have seen, Chap. iii. § 3, Obs. 7, some of the paraphrases are more absurd than the others. The most absurd of them all is that on the Song of

a Vid Repertor. für bibl. und morgenl. Litterat. T. xv. p. 174.

Solomon, which is wholly wrested to the praise of the Jewish people. Three Chaldaic paraphrases of the book of Esther have been discovered, one of which being less diffuse, and in all respects more accurate, is justly esteemed more ancient than the other two, which are ridiculously diffuse.

Obs. 3. The particular cause of making the Chaldaic translations was the same as that which produced the Alexandrine Greek version, namely, the daily increasing disuse of the language of their ancestors; a fact which will scarcely be doubted or controverted by any one conversant with the subject. It is also extremely probable, from the circumstances of the case, that the first Chaldaic versions were made in Babylon. For it appears that very many Jews remained there after the restoration of their country: there too was spoken that Aramæan dialect, which got its name from the Chaldeans after their conquest of that territory, and to which the Babylonian Jews had learned to become more and more accustomed. which occasioned the loss of their own language. Consequently some time before the age of our Saviour, it seems to have been a received custom among them, when the books of Moses, which they principally used, were read in their synagogues, to explain in the Chaldaic tongue whatever was difficult to be understood; until at last a general desire was manifested for a complete translation, which Onkelos was the first to execute. And as this version was in the highest esteem for its faithfulness and accuracy, it by degrees became the more acceptable to the Jews residing in Palestine, in proportion as in process of

time their value for the Alexandrine version decreased: from this too it happened, that from time to time persons became desirous of employing themselves in translating the Mosaic and the other books of Scripture into Chaldaic: which versions, however, from the daily increasing propensity of the Jewish turn of mind to the most silly trifling, became the more inept, the more recent they were.

Obs. 4. The hermeneutic use of even the most ancient of these Chaldaic versions is very little; and they are of no value in criticism, unless supported by other authorities. They seem anciently to have been written without points, or at least generally to have wanted them; and as in adding them afterwards, negligence and an arbitrary method of proceeding was adopted, only the most trifling confidence can be placed in these points. In very many places these versions have been conformed by the Jews to the Masoretic text, with which, in general, therefore they agree.

Obs. 5. In this place it will be proper to say something of the Hebrew version of those parts of Daniel and Ezra, which occur in these authors, written by them in Chaldee. Kennicot found it added to a manuscript, and inserted it in his edition of the Old Testament. No one of any penetration will be of opinion, that it is the real Hebrew text of Daniel and Ezra, whose place a Chaldaic translation had long occupied. For it manifestly betrays a translator who endeavoured to transfer with minute diligence, and even almost to obtrude the peculiarities of the Chaldaic into the Hebrew language. And besides, its

style is that of a very recent age, whose author seems to have lived not long before the date of the manuscript, which is referred to the year of our Lord 1327. The use of this Hebrew translation to the better understanding of the Chaldaic text is scarcely any, and for the purposes of criticism very little.

### § 4.

Some Syriac versions of the Old Testament proceeded from the Christians, the oldest and the best of which was made from the Hebrew text.

Obs. 1. Various Syriac translations of the Old Testament were made into their vernacular language by different Syrian Christians of different sects: but only one of these is known, taken immediately from the Hebrew text. It is generally called Peschito Simple, i. e. pure, faithful: for by this Syriac noun is the Greek word ἀπλοῦς, simple, upright, free from fault or stain, translated in the New Testament; so that it was a version whose excellence and faithfulness was highly esteemed, and possessed of the greatest authority. This appellation may, however, be understood of a translation extensively received, as this was, being used in common by all Syrians of whatever sect in religion they were; for the verb case signifies, he expanded, extended.

Obs. 2. Although we cannot go along with some Syrians, who boast too highly of the antiquity of

this version, in holding that it existed long before the Christian era; yet we can scarcely doubt that it is of great antiquity, and was made not long after the translation of the Syriac New Testament. For it was not only in existence a considerable time before Ephraim Syrus who commented upon it in the fourth century, but even in the time of Melito, about the year 170, as Milla has rightly judged from his scholium on Genes. xxii. 13, where Melito has quoted this version.

Obs. 3. That this translation, which was made from the Hebrew, as its whole contexture shews, and as is expressly declared by Abulpharagius, Histor. Dynast. p. 100, was the work of various translators, is evident from the diversity of its style. But as it cannot with any probability be ascribed to Jewish, but is rather due to Christian authors, we are of opinion that it was executed by Jews, natives of Syria, who had embraced the Christian religion.

Obs. 4. This version is possessed of great excellencies, which render it very valuable both to the interpreter and critic of the Old Testament. Its authors were, for the times, highly skilled in the Hebrew language, and pursuing a middle course between a too free and too servile a manner of translating, endeavoured as far as possible to give correctly the meaning of the words. And although, through the injuries of time, and the carelessness of transcribers, it has often been corrupted, nay, even from time to time interpolated from other versions, it has nevertheless

come down to us in a much purer state, on the whole, than the Alexandrian Greek version.

Obs. 5. As the Greek version itself was in the highest estimation among the Syrians, it was more than once translated into the Syriac language. The best of these versions is that from the Hexaplar, according to the edition of Eusebius and Pamphilus, already spoken of, § 2. Obs. 10., which was made about the beginning of the seventh century. Besides excerpts, some books of the Old Testament have been edited in Syriac and Latin, from the Milan manuscript of this version, which contains several of the books of the ancient sacred code. In 1787, Math. Norberg published Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and Cajetan Bugatus edited Daniel in 1788, and the Psalms in 1820. From another manuscript, which comprehended most of the other books, but which now seems to be lost, Andreas Masius long before, in the year 1574, had published Joshua in Latin only. Whatever, however, proceeds from the Hexaplar version, every one must see has more a reference to the criticism of the Alexandrine version than to that of the Hebrew text.

# § 5.

Many Latin versions were also made by the Christians; of these the ancient or Italic version, and the more recent made by Jerome, from which last the Vulgate was formed, deserve to be mentioned: the former of these versions was

translated from the Alexandrine Greek, and the latter from the Hebrew.

Obs. 1. Augustine, de doctrin. Christ. lib. ii. c. 2, testifies, that in the early times of Christianity, there were very many Latin versions of the sacred Scriptures, and says, Ibid, c. 15, that among these the Italic was distinguished for its close adherence to the words of Scripture, and for perspicuousness of language. By this title was designated the ancient Latin version, which was more used than the others. By Jerome it is called the Common and the Vulgate, by which he means—employed generally by the common people. It was conformed to the text of the Alexandrine version, such as it was before the time of Origen; and the few fragments which could be collected of it were published by Peter Sabbatier, in the last century.

Obs. 2. Of this version, translated from a faulty Greek text, and which had undergone at various times many changes, Jerome determined to undertake a corrected edition, agreeable to the Greek hexaplar text. But he only published the Psalms, Proverbs, Canticles, Job, and the two Books of Chronicles, from having lost the other books, as he himself tells Augustine in the end of his 134th epistle, a through the frand of some one. Of this edition there have as yet been discovered only the Psalms and the Book of Job.

Obs. 3. Before Jerome had brought to a conclusion he correction of the ancient Latin version, he under-

a In Valerius' Edition. It is the 79th in the Benedictine edition.

took a new translation from the Hebrew text; for which purpose he consulted the best copies which could be got, and the most learned Jews of his time, and also very often called to his assistance the Alexdrine, and other Greek versions. This work he executed in such a manner that his translation is equally useful with the ancient Syriac version, both in the interpretation and criticism of the books of the Old Testament.

Obs. 4. This new version of Jerome, from its great excellence, in process of time attained such celebrity as at last every where to abolish almost the use of the more ancient Italie in the Christian church, and became itself the Vulgate, or the commonly used version. From its general use, however, it underwent many changes; partly through the negligence of transcribers, and partly from the absurdity of correctors. The council of Trent, therefore, which, in the sixteenth century, declared it authentic,—that is, a faithful translation, and of the highest authority,commanded that it should be edited in the most accurate manner possible. About the end of the same century, the Roman Pontiff, Sixtus V., caused this new edition to be put forth; and his successor, Clement VIII., gave also another new one. But neither the eare of these Popes, nor of others, has restored this Latin version to its original state, such as it proceeded from its author. Not even Vallarsius, the latest editor of the works of Jerome, has been able to accomplish this, although he made diligent use of the best aids, which he had got together. The version of the Psalms, from the Hebrew text edited by Jerome, is not that which is found in the editions of the Vulgate, but that which he had made or corrected from the Greek hexaplar text.

§ 6.

There are also very many other ancient versions of the Old Testament; the principal of which we deem it sufficient briefly to pass in review.

Obs. 1. After the Arabians, under the successors of Mahomet, had extended their empire far and wide, and had accustomed the vanquished nations to their language, both Jews and Christians, subjected to their power, found, in process of time, the necessity of an Arabic version of the sacred code. Consequently not a few Arabic translations from the Hebrew text, or from other versions, were made. Of the first kind is the Arabic version of the Pentateuch, which is printed in the Polyglot bibles. Its author, R. Saadias, surnamed Gaon, גאון, or Excellent, lived in the tenth century. He was a native of Egypt, and head of the Jewish Academy at Babylon for two years. thought to have translated the whole Old Testament into the Arabic language. Undoubtedly the Arabic version of Isaiah proceeded from him; which was separately edited, not long ago, by H. E. G. Paulus. This translator adopts a freer and almost paraphrastical manner, and his version has undergone some changes and interpolations, and, consequently, cannot rank among those of the highest utility. From this version of the Pentateuch differs greatly the one edited by Erpenius, A.D. 1622, which adheres closely to the Masoretic text, and whose author was an African Jew of a later age. It is consequently of very little use. The Arabic version of Joshua, which is in the Polyglots, and which is from the Hebrew text, is of an unknown author and date.

The other Arabic versions which have been published are not from the Hebrew text. The version of Job and Chronicles, found in the Polyglots, is from the old Syriac translation, and that of the other book in these publications is made from the Alexandrine Greek. The other Arabic versions being less connected with the scope of our work, we shall pass over without notice.

Obs. 2. An Ethiopic version was made from the Alexandrine Greek text for the use of the Christians in Ethiopia, not earlier, however, than the fourth century, when the Christian religion was finally established in that country. Of it only a few portions have been separately edited; and in the Polyglots we have only the Psalms and Canticles. From the Egyptian Christians, or Copts, have also proceeded Coptic versions, whose date is uncertain, and which have been only published partially, and in a detached manner.

Obs. 3. To say nothing of the Persic version of the Pentateuch, made by a Jew for the use of his countrymen who were subject to the Persians, which is added to the Polyglots, and not destitute of merit, we must take notice of the Samaritan and Arabic versions of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The former, by far the more ancient of the two, was made at the time when the language, formerly vernacular among the Israelites, (i. e. the ten tribes, ) had altogether degenerated into a most impure dialect. It almost always adheres to the Hebraico-Samaritan text, is deservedly accounted highly useful in a critical point of view, and is printed in the Polyglots. Afterwards, when the Samaritans became subject to the Arabians, and were growing more and more accustomed to their language, they at first were obliged to make use of the version of Saadias, of which we have taken notice in Obs. 1. But as this was the work of one of the hated nation of the Jews, and made from the Jewish Pentateuch, they were desirous of having an Arabic version of their own Pentateuch made by one of their own countrymen. This, therefore, Abou Said executed; who lived after the middle of the tenth century, but previous to the beginning of the thirteenth; for it has not been possible hitherto to ascertain more accurately his time. The version itself has not yet been printed; but, as far as its nature has been investigated, it is no less valuable for the criticism of the Hebraico-Samaritan text from which it was made, than the older Samaritan version of that text.

#### CHAPTER V.

ON THE AUTHENTICITY, INTEGRITY, AND HISTORI-CAL FAITH OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTA-MENT.

# § 1.

A good interpreter of the Old Testament must, in our times particularly, pay due regard to estimating the authenticity, integrity, and historical credit so long attributed to these books; and, consequently, must settle what opinion he ought to form regarding each of these particulars.

Obs. 1. If any one wishes to be a sound interpreter of any one of the books of the Old Testament, it is certainly not immaterial to him, whether the book be spurious, or corrupted by the perversity of men, or unworthy of credit in the historical events which it relates, or otherwise. The more important, too, the subject of a book, so much the more curious and solicitous will be be regarding its authenticity as it is called, its integrity, and its historical faith, if this last also should become the subject of his discussion.

Obs. 2. As it is by no means inconsistent with the education of one who is desirous of employing himself in the interpretation of the books of the New

Testament that those particulars, which we have mentioned, should be investigated, I am of opinion, that they should not altogether be passed over in the education of an interpreter of the much more ancient books of the Old Testament; because there have been many in our times who have formed very rash opinions regarding their origin, composition, and the credit which they deserve in historical matters.

# § 2.

When influenced by sufficiently powerful reasons, we pronounce the books of the Old Testament authentic; we mean, that they are not spurious, nor forged by one or more authors,—nor are they fictions of later ages, which have been fraudulently obtruded upon us.

Obs. 1. It is not foreign to the state of things in our time to observe, that nothing in all cases is easier, when speculating regarding books of very high antiquity, than to frame multiplied opinions regarding their origin and composition which will appear ingenious, but which, by their boldness, may bring into the utmost danger the authority and value of the writings. And, therefore, should strong circumstantial arguments not be found, by which such hypotheses may be refuted, this should not appear surprising to any one who has reflected, that, in the nature of things, a wide field is open for conjecture in such a

subject, and that absolute demonstration can scarcely be attained. Thus, then, it is not possible that we should so determine the authors, and date of each of the writings which are contained in the Old Testament, and the manner in which they were framed, as that nothing farther should remain to be desired. Our age hath taught us to what a degree of audacity the lust of framing hypotheses may proceed, where historical documents of the most unexceptionable nature cannot be brought in opposition.

- Obs. 2. Although, however, the authenticity of the books of the Old Testament cannot be so absolutely demonstrated as to meet, in every respect, the objections and doubts of those who give full rein to their imaginations; there are not wanting weighty arguments, which may satisfy those who require nothing more than what the nature of the subject can afford; which, therefore, we shall now produce, though only in a summary manner.
- Obs. 3. The external arguments producible, or what we call testimonies, are not indeed trifling, but such as may satisfy a candid friend to truth and religion, in a subject of such remote antiquity. We have then, as witnesses, not only Jesus and his Apostles, Flavius Josephus, Philo Judæus, and the Alexandrine translators of the Old Testament, who are more ancient than all these, but likewise the whole Jewish nation, which has always held these books to be genuine. But how could it have happened, that this whole nation should have suffered these books, which were so closely connected both with their civil constitution and their religion, to have been obtruded upon them

by their priests? And let it not be said that perhaps the fraud was of a nature agreeable to the Jews in general, as affording them a ground of boasting in the possession of certain sacred books. For, so far were these books from being a cause of boasting to them, that, on the contrary, they were an everlasting monument, as it were, of the perversity of their dispositions, which certainly they would not have allowed to have been erected to their disgrace, if there had been even the slightest cause of doubting their truth. This testimony, too, of the whole nation has the greater force, particularly when we call to mind, that books in general were very rare in the most ancient times, and, moreover, that in the more recent books of the Old Testament, certain more ancient and authoritative books were acknowledged and received, and often appealed to, and, finally, that no period in any degree suited for the purpose can be fixed upon, either before the Babylonish captivity, or afterwards, in which the Hebrew nation would have commenced receiving supposititious books with a blind and eager credulity, as genuine and sacred, and recommending them to a credulous posterity.

Obs. 4. To the external arguments we add the internal, as they are generally called, which are derived from the very nature of the books, proving in no obscure manner their authenticity. For such is their nature and genius, that nothing can be said regarding any other books of very remote antiquity which is more satisfactory.

And, in the first place, we deem it worthy of attention, that in different books a great diversity of style

is perceivable. This, too, not only takes place where different subjects are treated of, but is such generally as characterises different authors and ages. Even in the very great similitude of historical narration among the Hebrews of every age, there is a marked distinction, such, for instance, as the books ascribed to Moses, and the books of Chronicles, which every one who is even moderately skilled in the language can easily observe. No less is the diversity in the poetical writings, though resembling each other in maintaining the same peculiarity of their poetical style: and this diversity in no small degree distinguishes even the poetical passages of each of the Prophets. At the same time, in such a diversity of writers and ages, there reigns throughout an astonishing agreement in sentiment and facts, without at the same time the least appearance of this being artfully aimed at; such indeed as displays the works not of spurious but geunine authors.

In the second place, as in writings bearing the names of their authors, some things generally appear which are congruous with the disposition and genius of the writers, so do we find the style of the various books breathing wholly the age to which they are assigned. By far the greater part of the hymns of David, for example, manifestly agree with his genius, history, and actions; and nothing can be imagined more truly Mosaic, than the xc psalm, to which his name is prefixed. Those writings too, which are generally reckoned the most ancient, have a more pure style than those which are said to have been composed when the state was verging to disso-

lution, or after the restoration of the Jews to their own land.

Lastly, through all the books, along with the greatest conformity to the genius and manners of the times, there appears also the utmost agreement in sentiments and views, and that too without the least appearance of design. Nothing occurs in them which is inconsistent with the remote ages to which they relate. Nay, such is their agreement with these, that if we peruse the different books in an attentive and unprejudiced manner, we shall find ourselves transferred as it were into those times of which they treat. Even foreign affairs, the origin and very ancient fates of nations, the institution of rites, customs, arts and seiences: all these, oftentimes only mentioned in a single expression, and in passing, most harmoniously accord with the genius of the times and events, and likewise with what may be gathered by due care and diligence from the best and most approved profane authors.

Obs. 5. Some things however are objected to, which seem to mark them as the productions of a later age: such as the names of cities and countries which were only subsequently imposed. But these were either changed in the text itself, in after times, for the sake of perspicuity, or were at first noted in the margin by those who transcribed the books, and afterwards were taken into the text as more convenient. Some other things which are thought to shew that they are of later date, consist partly of historical and geographical observations added afterwards; partly of supplementary adjections by a subsequent

writer; partly of interpolations, such as occur in very ancient writings of every kind; and partly of passages, which by more accurate investigation are easily reconcileable with that antiquity to which these books are referred.

Obs. 6. We shall take this opportunity of briefly touching on an objection made by some of the philologers of our age, through which they endeavour to refer the composition of the writings of the Old Testament, to which we are accustomed to assign the most remote antiquity, to a much later period. They make an appeal to the great sameness of the Hebrew language, observable in the writings of the Old Testament. For this language, say they, only arrived at that degree of cultivation, which is exhibited in those which are accounted the most ancient writings, in the days of David; neither is it possible to conceive, when we reflect on the great mutability of languages, how the Hebrew language was scarcely at all changed during nearly a thousand years, which are reckoned to have elapsed between the time of Moses and the Babylonish captivity, whilst the Latin and German languages, in a shorter space of time, have undergone the greatest changes. But we may be allowed to express our surprise, that, with such an acquaintance with Eastern languages as the last century has introduced among us, so absurd a comparison could have been instituted between them, and the Latin and German languages. For it is well known, that there is nothing more fixed, nothing more always alike, than what has once gained a footing among the Orientals, provided changes are not brought about by external causes; and we have seen above, Chap. ii. § 1. Obs. 3, that the Arabic dialect, which is closely allied to the Hebrew, and of no less antiquity, has, through a much greater length of time, suffered very little change; and that, as far as its genius and form is concerned, has remained the same from the earliest records even to our days. But, besides, there were peculiar causes which operated among the Hebrews, in retaining their language in its primitive genius and form, from the time of Moses to the Babylonish captivity. The Mosaic constitution itself kept the Israelites secluded, as it were, from other nations: and the continual and indispensable use of Mosaic books in their public sacred duties, and even in their civil affairs, recommended, as it were, and enforced upon them the retaining perpetually their language unaltered, whilst no external cause operated to produce a change. Nor, during the first ages of their state, did they suffer any thing from other nations of such a nature as to inflict any injury on their language. Farther, it is a rash assumption, arising solely from prejudice, that the Hebrew language, such as it appears in the best writers, attained that degree of perfection only in the age of David. It, indeed, underwent some changes, but these were very triffing; and it was only as the Jewish kingdom was approaching to its destruction, that the fatal influence of external causes was principally felt. Besides, it is worthy of notice, that even the language of the Greeks, through a very long space of time, was subjected to no great change.

§ 3.

We hold, likewise, the integrity of the books of the Old Testament, so far as to believe that they have never been intentionally corrupted nor changed in any respect, from bad motives.

Obs. 1. When we assert that the books of the Old Testament are pure and incorrupted, we do not mean to say, that no errors are to be found in them, but such as may be rectified by the collation of their manuscript copies. No person, but one quite ignorant of criticism, will be inclined to ascribe such a degree of integrity, even to the books of the New Testament. What we mean to say, is, only that the books of the Old Testament have not been corrupted by wicked men, nor altered fraudulently. And we shall have no difficulty in showing that no such alteration took place before the age of our Saviour, and that it could not have happened afterwards.

Obs. 2. If any corruption of the sacred books of the Jews took place before the Christian era, it must be supposed, either to have happened before the Babylonish captivity, or after it. Before that captivity, so few, indeed, were the copies of the sacred books, that an alteration of this nature seems not difficult to have been attempted or effectuated. But during the whole of that interval of time, the Jews, in general, cared, for the most part, so little for their sacred books, as to leave no room for the suspicion that they corrupted them. For we know, that they were much more prone to a veneration for idols and false gods, than to a regard for that religion which was delivered to them through divine revelation, by Moses. Why then should we imagine that they wished to change any thing in books, for which, in general, they cared very little? And had they been desirous of making any change in them, undoubtedly they would have expunged very many passages, in which they saw the perversity of their dispositions and manners, objected to them. Not even upon the priests themselves, to whom the care of these books had been committed, nor upon their kings and men of highest dignity, does any suspicion of such alteration, either attempted or perpetrated, fall, as we find in these books, not a few things, by no means honourable to them; and, in fine, whatever else we see reprehended by the prophets, those very severe censors of those princes and priests, we never read of the slightest imputation to them of such a crime. By the destruction of their state, and their subsequent captivity, however, it cannot be denied that the Jews, vehemently affected by this calamity, began to be actuated by a very different spirit from what they formerly were. But, however much this change of mind rendered them afterwards addicted to their own true religion, and incited them to a great care of their sacred books, we find no ground for a suspicion that they ever wished to change any thing in these books. For they were not immediately in the hands of the

common people; and those Jews who presided over the administration of sacred and civil affairs, held these writings, in which they believed the statutes of God to be contained, most sacred; and they were, besides, men equally eminent for their piety and in-When, too, in process of time, the copies of the sacred books came to be multiplied, along with the love of religion, the superstition of the Jews greatly increased; so that if any one had proposed, even in the way of a pious fraud, to have changed any thing in these books, he would have appeared, both to himself and others, to have been laying sacrilegious hands upon them. To this, we may also add the evidence of the very ancient Greek version; in which, not a few discrepancies from the Hebrew text are observable, but not of such a nature as would shew that the text was ever corrupted purposely. In fine, Christ himself, though he often reprehended the crimes of the Jews, and objected to their traditions, by which they had perverted the spirit of their religion, and the meaning of their sacred writings, never accused them of the sacrilege of having, by their traditional fictions, corrupted or depraved the Hebrew text. There is also a very remarkable passage in Josephus against Apion, B. i. 8, where he asserts, that such was the veneration among the Jews for the sacred books, that in the very long series of ages, no one, down to his time, had ever dared to add to or take away any thing from them, or even to make in them the least alteration.

Obs. 3. It was impossible, after the birth of Christ, for the Jews to corrupt the Hebrew text. For, since

the Christian religion had its origin in Judea itself, and very many Jews also, of every condition in life, embraced it, some of these at least were in possession of copies of their ancient sacred books, which they justly continued to hold in veneration; consequently, if any of the Jews who tenaciously adhered to their paternal religion, had wished to corrupt these writings, they must have been unable to accomplish it, without the knowledge, and against the will, of those followers of Christ who were opposed to them. When, in the course of time, the number of those became increased who made use of the writings of the Old Testament, any attempt at their depravation would have been less successful: and when at length the Jews came to dispute against the Christians, they did not even attempt to corrupt those passages by which the Christians principally attacked them, nor would such an attempt at fraud have easily succeeded at any time. Nay, by the dispersion of the Jews far and wide, and the diffusion of the Christian religion through the various parts of the inhabited and civilized world, copies of the books of the Old Testament were so much increased and multiplied, that it would be necessary to refer their depravation to causes which could not have existed, and we should be forced to suppose that Jews and Christians had, as it were by covenant, mutually agreed to corrupt them. Besides, there were numerous received versions of the Old Testament: which, unless perverted by the same changes, would have opposed a very great obstacle to these corruptions being everywhere admitted.

Obs. 4. There have been some, however, who did accuse the Jews of corrupting the sacred volume. Among this number were some of the Doctors or Fathers of the ancient Christian church; as, for instance, Justin Martyr in his Dial. with Trypho the Jew, sect. 71-73, Irenæus Against heresies, B. iv. chap. 25, Tertullian On the dress of Women, chap. 3, Jerome, Epist. to the Galat. iii. 10. But the accusations partly regard the wrong interpretations put by the Jews on the sacred text: partly also, they arose from this, that these Fathers argued from the Greek version, while the Jews, on the other hand, argued from the Hebrew text, and the former, when their version did not altogether coincide with the text of the Jews, accused these last of corrupting it. There have, however, been persons in later ages who have attributed to the Jews the same crime; to prove which, they have appealed to the testimony of the Fathers, and have also produced some examples. The former, however, is not of sufficient weight to substantiate the accusation: and the latter are merely various readings, with the exception of Deut, xxvii. 4-8. There they consider that the Jews have changed the name of mount Garizim, as it is rightly written in the Samaritan Pentateuch, into Ebal, that they might take from the Samaritans whatever might conduce to increase their veneration for that mountain, which they esteemed sacred: for, as they argue, it was more fitting that an altar should be erected on that mountain on which the blessings were to be pronounced, than on the other, whence the curses were to be poured forth. But the reading of the Hebrew

text is justly esteemed the most correct; it being right that solemn execrations be confirmed by victims offered on the altar. We are therefore of opinion, that some Samaritan substituted by conjecture in his Pentateuch the name of the other mountain, considering it to be more adapted to the context. And indeed, we have already observed (Chap. iii. § 6, Obs. 3, near the end,) that the Samaritan Pentateuch has suffered not a few changes, which have been, some of them at least, made intentionally and according to some critical rule.

### \$ 4.

Finally, we are justified in maintaining that the books of the Old Testament, in all historical narratives, are entitled to the fullest credit.

Obs. 1. When we speak of the historical credit due to the books of the Old Testament, we allude not solely to those writings, which are in themselves of the historical class, but likewise to those others whose subject is not altogether historical, but which contain some historical notices, or are closely connected with historical events. To this class, however, we do not refer these books, which although partly in a historical form, yet have not a historical subject; which we think to be the ease with regard to the books of Job and Jopah. In both of these seems to be contained an extended moral parable; for the framing of which some true history afforded

the ground-work; so that in neither is historical truth the principal object, except in so far, as that the dispositions and manners of men, and the nature and circumstances of the times and events, be truly represented.

Obs. 2. In vindicating, on the present occasion, the historical credit of the books of the Old Testament, only some of the more general arguments can be noticed, such as we consider to be of the greatest force. Whatever, then, we find historically related in the Old Testament, has that admirable simplicity which must readily satisfy a candid reader, that the writers were actuated, not by the desire of pleasing, but by the simple love of truth. That simplicity, too, which is the seal of truth, not only appears in their relation of ordinary events, but in those likewise which are astonishing and miraculous. And even when, in the account of these, the language sometimes assumes a loftier and more elevated tone, it is manifestly of that nature which we must ascribe to the unusual greatness of the event, and to the feelings excited by it, and not to the desire of magnifying it. Again, the writers of the Old Testament describe most correctly the ancient manners of their own and other nations, and, without any art, so depict the various characters of the men they speak of, as to leave not the slightest room to doubt that they are represented by them exactly as they were. In fine, they never conceal, dissemble, or excuse, but candidly relate the vices, not only of their nation, and of those illustrious men who belonged to it, but even their own. In a word, the more attentively and frequently any one who is free from prejudice, peruses the historical portions of the Old Testament, the more will he perceive that there are no writers in all antiquity more distinguished, and more to be recommended for their historical faith.

Obs. 3. There have been, however, some among our later philologers, who have called in question the historical faith of most of the writers of the Old Testament, respecting which we are now treating. These men, although they have not openly impugned those innate marks of truth which we have pointed out, have yet endeavoured to shew, that most of the historical narrations contained in the Old Testament were written long after they took place, and that they were derived from ancient traditions, very frequently manifestly perverted through length of time and the proneness of men to render illustrious some events by giving them the appearance of miracles. this allowed, the historical credit of the books of the Old Testament would rest on a very slippery foundation, nay, would be altogether deprived of its principal supports.

Obs. 4. Those arguments which are brought forward (§ 2.), particularly the internal arguments as they are called, for proving generally the authenticity of the books of the Old Testament, have also great force in proving their historical fidelity: and the person who wishes to judge and act candidly, and to demand no more regarding books of the highest antiquity, than can be expected regarding compositions of so remote an age, will readily perceive the rashness of the assumption that the historical narrations of

the Old Testament have been derived only from un-

Obs. 5. It is very far indeed from being true, that all the historical books contained in the Old Testament may with probability be reckoned to have been written long after the events. To take for example the books which pass under the name of Moses, which hold the first place among the historical writings of the Old Testament—there are some philologers in Germany who assert that these were not composed before the times of David. But the reasons which they give are for the most part far-fetched, and derived also from this circumstance, that a proper arrangement is not in all cases observed; but this very neglect of arrangement is rather an argument why we should hold Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch; who, without any art, such as was inconsistent with the habits of his age, consigned to writing the various events as they took place, and delivered them to his countrymen. But again, the book of Deuteronomy is most manifestly composed quite in the peculiar manner of Moses; and the things which are contained in the three former books, are assumed as known in the addresses contained in that book. In fine, the mention of the books of the law is very frequent, down from a very remote antiquity; which therefore, if we wish to be candid, we must believe to be the compositions of Moses himself, to whom they have always been ascribed.

Obs. 6. Neither ought we to reckon that even those books, which we do not deny to have been put into the form in which we now have them at an after

period, such particularly as the books of Samuel and Kings, were composed merely from traditions, and therefore of dubious credit. For indeed the manner of narration, although imperfect, and not agreeable to the more recent rules of historical composition, is yet altogether such as characterises an author, who had access to the best sources of information, and who employed undoubted historical documents. And it clearly appears from 1 Chron. xxix. 29, that there were fuller annals written by men of the highest authority and credit; and in the books of Kings, these more extended annals, from which the author drew his information, are more than once quoted in proof of what he says.

Obs. 7. We may here take an opportunity of subjoining some observations regarding the most ancient of all historical books, the book of Genesis. As this book contains accounts of things long anterior to the age of Moses, reaching even to the very infancy of the human race, it may seem to be of all others the least worthy of credit. But it has been observed by many, and put beyond a doubt, that that book consists of various parts, written by different authors, which Moses joined together and afterwards prefixed to his own books. There is, besides, a remarkable diversity of style in these different portions; and of that sort too, that the more remote the times are to which the narrative refers, the more is it brief and more replete with images and figures, and consequently bears more striking indications of a remote antiquity, easily to be perceived by a learned and candid reader, and breathes

more of the infancy of the human race; all which characteristical marks carry along with them such a force of evidence as cannot be fairly resisted. Nor is it superfluous to remark, that the art of writing is of such antiquity in the East, that the farther you trace it back, the farther its origin seems to recede. But were it that the more ancient relations at least had sometimes been only preserved by oral tradition; why should it not be that they should have been equally well preserved by those who were interested in them, as events particularly remarkable, and much longer genealogies are retained faithfully by the genuine Arabs, and delivered down like a sacred deposit to their posterity to be religiously preserved?

#### CHAPTER VI.

ON THE DEGREE OF ATTENTION DUE TO THE EX-TRAORDINARY INTERPOSITION OF GOD IN REGARD TO THAT RELIGION, WHICH IS CONTAINED IN THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

## § 1.

In interpreting the books of the Old Testament, it is not in our times a matter of indifference, what opinions may be formed regarding the divine interpositions in the religion contained in those books; it is therefore necessary for

an interpreter, that he pay attention to this most important subject.

Obs. 1. In former ages, whoever employed himself in the interpretation of the sacred books, was accustomed to treat them as attributable to a divine origin; and such was the general consent among Christians regarding the divine interposition of Almighty God in the religion contained in these books, and in the affairs connected with it, that, when discussing the manner of interpreting them, there was no necessity for saving a word on this subject. This was a point confined to theologians solely, and was therefore discussed, as a topic peculiar and exclusively belonging to them, in their schools. But for some time past, it has become prevalent in not a few places in Germany, even among those to whom the guardianship of religion is committed, not to acknowledge any such extraordinary interposition, and to explain the sacred books in conformity with this novel opinion. The question, therefore, regarding the divine origin of this ancient religion, and its sacred volume, is now justly referred to the science of sacred hermeneutics.

Obs. 2. Indeed, in our age, the divine origin of the Old Testament has come to be more and more called into doubt, by very many of those who profess themselves to be interpreters of the sacred books. They have, in fact, endeavoured to explain every thing which is met with in these books regarding divine extraordinary visions and institutions, from the genius of that remote age, and from the general manner of thinking and acting among men of ancient times.

They have farther attempted to shew in what manner the human understanding, in some wise men among the Hebrews, might have arrived at certain conclusions which heretofore were usually ascribed to divine inspiration and instruction. Thus, according to them. the doctrine contained in the books of the Old Testament was called divine, only because it was attributed by its authors to God; and they, in conformity with the established custom of antiquity, called themselves divinely inspired. Besides, it might also be accounted a divine doctrine, in as far as those who broached it acted under the direction of the ordinary providence of God. Nav, since it is becoming to dignify with the title of divine excellence whatever is excellent and noble in man, why should not these ancient and venerable Hebrews be ranked among the number of divine men, since they seem, by their sublimer intelligence, to have raised themselves above the standard of the vulgar and of their age? It is the preferable mode, therefore, to attribute what are called miracles, solely to the manner of narrating events, or to the opinions entertained in those times.

Obs. 3. It would be tedious to review and discuss accurately, and one by one, all the points connected with this new mode of interpretation. We shall therefore account it sufficient, to shew that it is indispensable for an interpreter to believe, and to have regard to, a divine extraordinary interposition in the religion of the Old Testament, and in the affairs connected with it.

§ 2

The doctrine of religion delivered in the books of the Old Testament, is so excellent that it is improper to ascribe it solely to the researches of those men who delivered it.

- Obs. 1. Even those who have been the most determined defenders of this new mode, and who have kept any bounds in arguing for their opinions, have found it necessary to acknowledge, that the doctrines of that religion which is found in the Old Testament, is most admirably adapted to the capacity of the age and the genius of the nation to which it was delivered: although there are not wanting persons who endeavour so to diminish and impair this excellence, as that little or nothing of it should remain.
- Obs. 2. We readily confess, that there are things observable in the notions which the books of the Old Testament teach, regarding the Supreme Deity, that are accommodated to the genius and circumstances of the times, and of mankind; and that, in many respects, the religious doctrines of the New Testament are superior. But this, indeed, is altogether agreeable to the nature of things; and, were it not so, the doctrine of both the sacred volumes would exhibit less illustrious marks of divine wisdom. We, however, rightly think that the notions concerning God, his nature and attributes, and concerning religion in

general, contained in the Old Testament, are so just, exalted, and sublime, that nothing can be produced from all the rest of antiquity, which deserves to be at all compared with them. It is indeed astonishing, that, whilst the other ancient and more noble nations of antiquity, which existed in the times of Moses, were devoted to Polytheism, sanctioned by their laws, in the nation of the Israelites alone we should behold the worship of one God, established and conjoined with their very political constitution by an indissoluble bond. When, moreover, not even the more excellent Greek philosophers were able to extricate the most momentous doctrine of the one true God from the fables of superstition, and to deliver it to their disciples as certain, and to be adhered to with the utmost stedfastness; what is the reason, why, long before their age, and the most splendid era of the Greeks, among the Hebrews alone, by no means deserving to be compared with them in the cultivation of the powers of the mind, that doctrine was publicly taught as the principal point in the whole of religion, and the chief foundation of their state itself; and that there were not a few who spoke of God in such a manner, as to fill the minds, even of us, so remote from their times, and instructed in the superior doctrine of Christ, with the highest veneration of the supreme God?

Obs. 3. The excellence of this doctrine, therefore, is such as can in no way be accounted for with probability, from natural causes. For no man will ever be able clearly to show how the wise men of the Israelitish nation, were alone able of themselves to

gain a superiority which nature had denied to the wise of more cultivated nations. For the nation itself was devoted to agriculture, and in its early ages, at least, was averse to the study of arts and learning, by which other nations became celebrated, and was not even attached to the worship of one God, but vehemently addicted to that of many; and yet this nation, by its whole constitution, was trained by public authority, to the purest of all the religions which are known to have existed in antiquity. Nor can these superior notions regarding God, be supposed to be derived from the Egyptians. Stephen, indeed, truly affirmed, Acts vii. 22, that Moses was educated in all their wisdom. But their most celebrated wisdom had no reference to the purity of religion; in which, so far were they from excelling, that, on the contrary, the utmost polytheistic superstition was already prevailing among them in the time of Moses, confirmed too, and recommended by the laws of the state; nor shall we allow ourselves to be easily persuaded, that at the same time the secret doctrine of the Egyptian philosophers or sages, however different from the superstition of the vulgar, was distinguished by such a degree of purity, as that Moses could derive from it any thing valuable for his purpose. We do not, however assert, that in the age of Moses, the doctrine of the unity of God was altogether unknown. But, at the same time, we are convinced, that only a very few traces of a pure religion, and these almost obliterated, can be shown to have existed at that period. And, is it credible that Moses, educated in the court of the Egyptian monarch, and accustomed from his tender years to the contemplation of so depraved a religion, should either have been instructed and instigated by some other person, or have attempted of himself to deliver to his countrymen an institution of religion, altogether opposed to that of the Egyptians? But it perhaps will be said, that the highly simple patriarchal religion, had not yet become altogether extinct among the Israelites during their stay in Egypt; which therefore, from whatever source it may have been derived, Moses might convert to his own purposes. This we readily grant. But, since the unhappy propensity of the Israelites to a depraved religion, existed in Egypt, we, on the other hand, ask how it came to pass, that Moses should attempt to establish a new commonwealth, founded wholly on the worship of one God, which, even in a much less remote antiquity, no one ever dreamed of, and should successfully accomplish this unheard of prodigy in politics among his countrymen, unless he had had God for his instigator, and leader, and constant teacher? For, although among the ancient Egyptians, as well as among the other nations of antiquity, religion was closely connected with political affairs, yet, nothing in this respect, similar to the Mosaic institution, in all its parts, can be produced from the whole history of the most ancient ages.

Obs. 4. Our opponents, in this case, do not deny that Moses said, that he was impelled and instructed by God; but they say, that he asserted this to add greater force to his laws and precepts; and that in this he acted in a similar manner with the other cele-

brated legislators of antiquity, who, in order to give the most sacred authority to their laws, were accustomed to declare, that they had intercourse with some deity. But we observe this difference, and that, too, not a trifling one,-that Moses not only professed himself a divine teacher and ambassador, but proposed to evidence this by his miracles; so that it is impossible to clear him of the crime of notorious fraud, unless he really was what he pretended to be, especially when he relates, Exod. iv. 1-17, that he accepted his divine commission reluctantly. And, indeed, the excellent disposition of the man completely removes all suspicion of deceit; and the miracles, by which he endeavoured to procure credit to his declarations, are of such a nature, that even now we must acknowledge them to have had the most powerful persuasive force. But we shall afterwards speak of miracles in another place. This one observation we shall make, as particularly deserving attention;—that Mahomet, although he professed himself a divine ambassador, did not, however, dare to propose to himself to feign any miracle; nay, he openly declared, that the power of doing miracles, when they were demanded of him by many, had been denied to him.

Obs. 5. To Moses we add the Prophets,—the subsequent teachers of this ancient religion, who gave such proofs of their divine mission, as that we find ourselves obliged to yield that complete credit to their having been commissioned by God, which some are disposed to deny to them. These were not few in number, and appeared among the Israelites during a long course of ages. Neither were these men ha-

ruspices, nor augurs, nor astrologers, who, from the flight of birds, the observation of the stars, or from the intestines of sacrificed animals, or from such triffing circumstances, derived omens: respecting all which the saving holds true, which Cicero attributes to Cato regarding the haruspices of his age, (De Nat. Deor. i. 26. and De Divinat. ii. 24,) " It seems surprising that an haruspex should not laugh, when he meets another haruspex." They were not the authors or interpreters of certain artfully ambiguous oracles, nor patrons of the popular superstition, nor the servants of princes, such as, according to history, were the persons among certain ancient nations who exercised the art of soothsaying. Nay, they were quite free from all those kinds of fraud which a perversion of religion has ever generated; for whenever they addressed the people or the princes, they always showed themselves the defenders of genuine piety and pure virtue, and by the excellence of their own morals added great weight to their salutary admonitions. And they did not recommend and require a scrupulous observance of external ceremonies alone; but a heart-felt reverence for God, purity of soul, and integrity of conduct. They sought the favour of no one, but were severe censors both of the superstition and the vices of the people. They flattered not the ministers of religion; nay, whatever was in them, or in any of the chief men, or even in the kings themselves, reprehensible, they reproved with a highly commendable boldness. When employed in the prediction of future events, they seemed to have them present to their minds; nor did they endeavour to divine

them by any secret art, but poured them out from the fullest conviction of their being afterwards assuredly verified by the event. Frequently, even plainly and unambiguously, did they so announce events that were quickly to happen, as not to show the least fear of their being convicted of error. In a word, were we to frame to ourselves the idea of men, who; honoured with a divine commission, would support that dignity in a suitable manner, such do we behold in the Hebrew prophets, expressed in the most lively manner. Seeing, then, that they were not few in number, and that they were of a nation which, from its proneness to the worship of false gods, was not disposed to reverence them in the manner they deserved; is it at all likely that so many men, highly venerable in all respects, should in this nation, through so many ages, have wished, or dared, or been at all able, to assume the dignity of prophets divinely commissioned, unless they had really been what they professed themselves to be?

## § 3.

We have reason to affirm, that real miracles, and consequently manifestations of extraordinary divine interpositions, were exhibited; by which the divine origin of the religion delivered in the books of the Old Testament was clearly confirmed.

Obs. 1. Without entering on the subject of miracles in general, we shall only make a few brief observations on those which Moses, the author of the ancient religion, and the founder of the Israelitic state, is said to have performed. Agreeably to the opinion of most of our opponents in this case, the things performed are not altogether to be denied, but are to be explained in conformity with the ordinary course of nature. Thus Moses is to be supposed to have exhibited before the Egyptian king, only a greater degree of skill and art than the Egyptian Magi could shew. In the dreadful plagues inflicted on the land of Egypt, which, according to our adversaries, were produced by natural causes, the only thing remarkable was, that Moses, through his superior acquaintance with natural science, was able to foresee the approach and the going away of each of them. It was also brought about by natural causes that the Red Sea was dried up, with which, as they suppose, Moses being acquainted, was able accurately to compute the time at which the passage would be most easy to the Israelites, but this being elapsed, the same passage, when attempted by the uninformed Egyptians, proved their destruction. In fine, to pass over other circumstances, the idea which ought to be entertained regarding the giving of the law at Sinai, is, that Moses observing the top of Mount Sinai covered with clouds, accompanied with thunder and lightning, which scene placed the Deity, as it were, present before their eyes; laying hold of this opportunity, and desirous, above all things, of impressing on his countrymen, the divine origin of his laws, pretended

that God was speaking in the thunder, and he declared that the summary of his laws which he afterwards delivered, comprehended in ten precepts, and engraven by his orders, on two tables of stone, contained those words which God wished to express by his thunders.

Obs. 2. But should this mode of explanation be adopted, not with regard to any one fact presenting the appearance of a miracle, but with regard to a very great number, many things will then have to be assumed, conjectured, and supposed, which have very little probability; many which took place through a very singular, and most rare casualty; many, which the more one lays together, and compares them with each other, the less will be believe the concurrence of the different things so highly fortunate for Moses' purpose, credible. But, let us grant all this; then must we suppose Moses to have been so superior in the knowledge of natural causes, and in his skill in magical arts, to all the wise men of Egypt, that, reduced to despair, they were obliged openly to confess, Exod. viii. 14, 15, that they were vanguished by a Hebrew whom they insolently looked down upon, and that he was aided by the hand of God. Then, too, it follows, that before Pharaoh and his whole court, before the Magi themselves, who had come by his order, and before those too who had the highest interest in convicting of fraud that principal patron of a hated race, and in punishing him as the contriver of an impious deceit; before these very bitter and acute adversaries, was Moses able so to support his pretended divine commission, as at last to attain his

object, and to carry off safe and sound, an unwarlike multitude, from a king pursuing them with a very powerful army. Finally, it is necessary to hold that Moses was able to persuade the Israelites, a very numerous nation, the whole of whom almost were tinged with the Egyptian superstition; a race too, most difficult to manage, and very sullen and obstinate, to receive his laws as divine; nay, was able to obtrude upon them a system of laws, of a nature highly displeasing to them, whose yoke they were perpetually endeavouring to shake off; and, consequently, that by his own unassisted wisdom, he overcame the various obstacles opposed to him by a people of this character, so as to be reckoned a divine legislator by the Hebrews of his own age, and by their posterity down to the present moment. In a word, either following the example of the open enemies of the sacred volume, we must reject the whole Mosaic history, such as it is recorded, as false; or, if taking many of the philologers of our own times, as our directors and guides, we receive that history as indeed true in itself, but think that those parts of it which contain any thing miraculous, are to be explained in conformity with the ordinary course of nature; then must we assume and assert many things which are so far from being natural or customary, as that they are much more difficult to be understood or believed, than even the greatest miracles.

## § 4.

We not only believe that a peculiar interposition of God must be acknowledged, in the giving of the religion comprehended in the books of the Old Testament, but likewise in the committing of it to writing; in other words, that its writers were divinely inspired.

Obs. 1. This question regarding the inspiration of the books of the Old Testament, may, indeed, be reckoned of less importance than that respecting their authenticity and historical credit, and the divine origin of the religion which they deliver, since, if one is fully persuaded of these, he can safely extract from them all that concerns religion. But this, however, he will be enabled to do with more certainty, if the arguments be satisfactory by which it is shewn that the writers were divinely assisted, and rendered free from error. It seems proper, therefore, on the occasion which now offers itself, to make a few remarks on this subject.

Obs. 2. Let us then see, in the first place, what idea we ought to form of inspiration, attending both to the import of the word itself, and to what it signifies. The word inspiration has its origin from the very celebrated passage in 2 Tim. iii. 16, where the apostle calls the volume of the Old Testament θεοπγευστον;

which, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom, must be explained that it was written ברוה אלהים, by the divine spirit; and this signifies, in the widest sense of the expression, by the divine power, by the assistance of God, which therefore was granted to the writers as far as they needed it. As to the thing itself, then, we may designate by the name of inspiration, (compare 2 Pet. i. 20.) that divine aid which Moses and the Prophets experienced in the knowledge of things pertaining to religion; in which sense we more generally employ the word revelation, or divine instruction. In this sense, no one can, with any degree of probability, affirm that all things which are contained in the Old Testament, are equally divinely inspired. For example, can those things be supposed to have been revealed by God to Moses, of which he himself had been an eye-witness, or of which he had otherwise the means of being correctly informed? Or did God inspire David in those psalms, in which he uttered imprecations against his enemies? But those things which Moses predicted to the Israelites that were to happen in times long posterior, and the promecies of David concerning the Messiah, who was to be born many ages afterwards; these we justly believe that they derived from divine inspiration or instruction. Here, therefore, we employ the word inspiration in a more restricted sense, as regarding the writing of certain things, having a particular reference to religion; so that, in this respect, the sacred writers were employed, under the direction of a peculiar divine providence governing them, and as far as was proper, assisting and guiding them. In committing to writing, then, the most important doctrines, the histories, and other things particularly connected with religion, the divine power so acted upon their minds, as to preserve them free from error. But in other things of less importance to religion, such as those psalms in which David inveighs with acrimony against his adversaries, the sacred writers acted under the same peculiar direction of divine providence, which, not only most wisely, and for the best purposes, permitted such things to be written, but even intended that they should be written, that they might be in conformity with the nature of things, and with the true feelings of the human soul, although they might not always be such as ought to be approved.

Obs. 3. If we adopt this notion of inspiration, we shall discover something in what is signified by this word harmonizing with the whole divine government of the Israelitic nation. Persuaded as we are, by the most eogent reasons, that this nation was under that peculiar government of God, which is called a Theocracy; and acknowledging, as we do, that this government was instituted in all its bearings, for the sake of religion, although not in every case acting in the same way, but conformably to the differing nature of men and circumstances; why should we exclude this divine superintendence from those books which were written for the common use of that same nation in religion? This then ought ever to be kept in view, that inspiration, rightly and fairly defined, should be referred principally to the doctrines of religion, and to the things most closely connected with it; in both of which, as written under the direction of God, it becomes us to have such faith in the sacred authors, as that particular divine assistance, which they enjoyed, demands. We are, however, by no means able to explain fully the mode of this extraordinary assistance, since we cannot even explain or understand clearly, that ordinary influence which God exerts upon the minds of men.

Obs. 4. That a peculiar divine assistance was really afforded to the writers of the Old Testament, we are assured from the circumstance, that Christ and his Apostles were in the habit of appealing to the words of the Old Testament, as divine oracles. If any one shall be disposed to resist their authority, he must then hold, either that Jesus and his Apostles were not divinely commissioned, any more than many of these later times esteem Moses and the Prophets not to have been; or, he must say, that they only accommodated themselves to the ideas of their countrymen, who estimated too highly the dignity of the sacred volume; or, lastly, he must lay it down, that their sacred books were called divine by the Jews themselves, merely in respect to the excellence of their contents.

And there are indeed persons who think that Jesus and his Apostles are not to be accounted divine teachers in any other sense, than when we call, what we admire as noble and excellent in any other men, divine: the rashness of which assumption this is not the place for demonstrating. Believing then the

divine authority of Christ and his Apostles, why should we not grant that they only accommodated themselves to the received opinions of the Jews, in what they said of the inspiration of the sacred books? The answer is, because they always, and on every opportunity, spoke in such magnificent terms of the books of the Old Testament; that there is no reasonable ground for doubting whether they declared their real sentiments. Some who saw that this could scarcely be denied, have asserted that not even the common people of the Jews, in the age of Christ and his Apostles, attributed any thing divine, in the strict sense of the word, to the sacred writings, but only meant to express their excellence by the honourable title of inspiration, as they were accustomed to ascribe every thing that was particularly excellent in its kind to God. But, Jesus and his Apostles spoke of these writings, and argued from them, in such a manner, as clearly ascribed to them something divine. Nay, indeed, he who shall dare to deny that the Jews venerated their sacred code, not from any belief of its divine origin, but merely on account of the excellence of its contents, will be over and above refuted by the history of that people, who for many ages before estimated these books as dearer than their lives; and extolled their divine origin even to a superstitious degree. Besides, Josephus, who lived, as every one knows, about the time of the Apostles, spoke and argued in such a manner regarding these books and their divine origin, in the passage which we have already quoted (Chap. v. § 3. Obs. 2, at the end,)

that it must clearly appear that this fiction of some late writers has not the slightest plausibility.

# § 5.

Although we acknowledge and assert the divine interposition, as to the doctrine of the religion which is contained in the Old Testament, and in the extraordinary things which were done for confirming it, and also in the writing of the books; yet we by no means exclude the employment of natural causes by the Almighty.

Obs. 1. As in our age, the extraordinary intervention of God is violently impugned in all things connected with the religion of the Old Testament, it is much more incumbent than formerly, upon an expositor, sedulously to endeavour to form to himself just notions upon this point.

Obs. 2. When then, we say, that as far as concerns the doctrine of religion, its authors were divinely instructed, we do not suppose that they were like machines, who did nothing of themselves, and that God did the whole through their means. For, as the ordinary providence of God acts upon men in a manner which is consistent with their rational nature, so

likewise, he instructed, enlightened, and directed those whom he wished to be the ministers of his extraordinary providence, in such a manner as was consistent with the excellent faculties of man, and worthy also of his own pre-eminent wisdom. Thus we have every reason to believe, that Moses was a divine teacher and ambassador, whom God himself instructed. But we have no reason to doubt, that to this same Moses, the rare endowments of mind which he possessed, and whatever valuable acquirements he got among the Egyptians, were of the greatest use. For, although no one can with any probability shew, or accurately define, what in each instance should be ascribed to God, and what to Moses, of the doctrines and laws which we are accustomed to call by his name; it is, however, quite sufficient to an ingenuous friend of truth, that he be convinced that Moses would never have been the teacher and legislator which we now see him to be, had not God been present with him in an extraordinary manner. Nay, even those parts which proceeded from the genius of Moses, as they were only applied with the consent of the Deity, to the constitution of the Israelitish religion and polity, have no less a divine authority, than what he immediately received from God himself; so that all the Mosaic doctrines, laws, and constitutions, may and ought to be called by the general appellation of divine.

Obs. 3. In these actions and events also, which we must designate by the name of miracles, it is not without reason that we hold that God frequently em-

ployed natural causes for the accomplishment of his purposes. Although this is not the place to enter on the discussion of the true nature of miracles, it is not foreign to our purpose to make this one remark, as being in itself highly probable, and conformable to the divine wisdom—that miracles, departing from the ordinary course of nature, were not contrary to the laws of nature, but took place agreeably to those very laws, through the peculiar interposition of God; that the events indeed were extraordinary, but produced by the supreme author and governor of nature, in conformity with the powers of nature. And, indeed, in not a few miracles, something is observable, from which it appears, that by them no violence, so to speak, was done to nature, but the powers of nature itself were so directed by God, as to place before the eyes of men an extraordinary event.a-That the Israelites, when going out of Egypt,

a The author here seems to have fallen into the strange confusion of ideas, so frequently observable in the language even of those from whom more accuracy might have been expected, regarding the terms Nature, powers, and laws of nature. Nature can mean nothing else, in the language of a sound Theist, than the works of God in the visible universe. The powers of nature, when the word nature is confined to the material works of God, are all passive, such as inertia, resistance, &c. It will not, at least in this country, be held by any true disciple of Newton, that active power can be inherent in mere matter, or, in other words, that such a thing as a physical cause (taking the word cause to mean efficient cause) can exist. Every efficient cause must therefore be of a spiritual nature; and all changes or phenomena in the material world must be produced by spiritual agency. The

passed through the Red Sea on dry ground, whilst the Egyptians, attempting, after them, the same passage, were overwhelmed and buried under the waves, is narrated in such a manner, as that we must be per-

powers of nature then are, in fact, not powers inherent in matter, or in the material world, or in any of its parts, but exhibitions of the divine and spiritual power of God continually in operation. The phrase laws of nature again, can, in the mouth of a sound Theist, only mean those fixed laws, by which the Almighty is continually operating in preserving his works in their beauty and order, in producing all the phenomena in the material world which we behold, and in preserving even the spiritual world, and in supplying to the spirits, whom he has created, all their powers and faculties at all times and at each individual moment. Sound Theism therefore, and the doctrine of revelation, which teaches that God worketh all in all, quite coincide on this point. The laws of nature then mean those rules by which the Almighty is pleased to act in producing the phenomena of the universe; and what we term a miracle is any phenomenon produced in contravention of those ordinary laws or rules by which the Almighty acts, or not conformable to them. Now, it must be quite evident from this definition of a miracle, that it can only be produced by the power of God. For no power can contravene or prevent his acting in the manner he has prescribed to himself-neither can any power produce a phenomenon different from his constituted rules of producing the phenomena of the universe, except such power as he immediately exercises, or gives the power of exercising; because all power exercised by any being is not only derived from him originally, but is every moment supplied by him. When, then, any phenomenon which we call a miracle is produced at the command of any person, or when he predicts it; it must be evident that such phenomenon or miracle is the immediate operation of God himself, and is a direct proof that the invisuaded, not only of the truth of the event, but also of the extraordinary interposition of God in the case. For the very historical relation itself, Exod. xiv. manifestly leads us to acknowledge a divine interven-

sible God is in communication with such person. And saying that God makes use of the powers of nature for his own purposes, in bringing about events, whether miraculous or not, is quite inaccurate; because there are no powers of nature distinct from his own immediate power. But again, it is reasonable to believe, that the all-wise and unchangeable God never deviates from his ordinary rules of acting in producing the phenomena of the universe, except when the ends which he sees fit to accomplish cannot be produced in that manner. A miraculous event, then, may be produced, partly by the power of God operating in the usual manner, and partly in an unusual manner. Thus the passage of the Red Sea, accomplished by the dividing of the waters, may have been brought about, partly by the strong east wind caused by God to blow during the whole of the night, an event quite consistent with his usual manner of acting, and partly by his power being exerted in an unusual manner, causing the waters to stand like a wall on the right hand and left of the Israelites, while they passed between on dry ground, which no strength, nor indeed any conceivable operation of wind, could do. But further, the immediate intervention of God is manifested in what is called, in common language, the powers of nature employed in this event; for Moses first informs the Israelites, that God had commanded him to stretch out his rod that the sea might be divided for their passage, and when he did in consequence stretch out that rod, immediately God caused a strong east wind to blow right across the sea in the line of their path. Now, the so called powers of nature being exerted immediately in this decided manner so favourable to his views, and in consequence of his prediction and stretching out his rod over the sea, was a clear indication of the intervention of God, and of Moses' communication with him .- Tr.

tion of that nature which we designate by the name of a miracle; and the hymn publicly sung on that occasion, Exod. xv., in which, moreover, we have a specimen of the genius of Moses, clearly confirms this narration. And that God employed natural causes in producing this extraordinary event, which Moses certainly could never have foreseen, the same historical relation, and the hymn of Moses itself, not obscurely indicate: compare Exod. xiv. 21, 28, with xv. 8, 10. In like manner, to give only one other example, that there was a real interposition of the Deity, in delivering the law on Mount Sinai, and not a mere thunder-storm, of which casual event Moses took advantage, and applied to his own purpose, may be fully perceived from those purifications and preparations which Moses is narrated to have directed to the people, three days before, Exod. xix.; and we cannot doubt that the thunder took place by the powers of nature itself, under the divine direction.

Ohs. 4. Lastly, the peculiar assistance which was afforded to the sacred writers, generally called by the name of inspiration, did not take away, or suspend the use of those natural faculties with which they were endowed, but seems to have been conjoined, and as it were, mixed up with their exercise. For, as in the communication of doctrines to be derived from divine instruction, and also in miracles themselves, God must be supposed to interpose in a manner conformable to the constitution of man, and the nature of things; so, likewise, in the inspiration of particular men, or in granting them extraordinary assistance to

commit subjects to writing without error, it is right to believe that God caused, that, while each writer followed his own particular genius, in using those assistances which were supplied to him, and in employing his own faculties, he should, at the same time, write under the guidance of God, so as never to err from the truth.

## PART FIRST.

#### SECTION SECOND.

OF THE PRINCIPAL ENDOWMENTS OF MIND, AND VIRTUES OF THE SOUL TO BE DESIRED AND CULTIVATED IN AN ACCOMPLISHED INTERPRETER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

#### CHAPTER FIRST.

OF THE ENDOWMENTS OF MIND.

## § 1.

No one has ever denied, that, to constitute a good interpreter of the Old Testament, certain natural qualifications, and these of no mean kind, are required.

Obs. 1. In all arts and sciences, and indeed in all the pursuits of man, it makes a mighty difference if one finds nature acting to him like an indulgent and kind mother, or unkindly and parsimoniously, like a step-mother. Labour, experience, and exercise, without doubt do a great deal, and without them, natural endowments alone, however excellent, will accomplish little; yet, if one born with the more excellent capa-

cities of mind, shall employ them aright, he will, as all allow, attain to much greater eminence in any pursuit to which he may apply himself, than he to whom nature has been less generous.

Obs. 2. Since, then, there are many subjects, the study of which is intimately connected with the right interpretation of the Old Testament, it is easy to see, that if conducted in a proper manner, it must require much labour. He, however, who applies himself to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and sedulously and diligently employs himself in this object, may expect much greater success in his labour, in proportion as he has got from nature a superior capacity. Such a felicity of nature as formed Hugo Grotius, the first author of the true interpretation of the New Testament, and an incomparable and ever during example of it, likewise formed Albert Schultens, who first, after having overcome the various obstacles of a number of ages, detected and disentangled the path, and clearly showed it to others, by which alone life could be restored, if we may so speak, to the dead language of the Old Testament, and deserved high and immortal praise, not only from the men of his own time, but also from posterity.

### § 2.

The gifts of nature which are here principally required, are genius and judgment.

Obs. 1. We have made no mention of memory, although we neither wish to deny nor to doubt, that its advantages in the interpretation of the Old Testament, are many. Even the very course of study which we have delineated in the former section, sufficiently indicates that we attribute much to that faculty, which diligently apprehends, and faithfully retains the objects presented to it. But in the interpretation of these, as well as of every other species of writings, the greatest part, if not the whole of what memory seems to perform, must be shared by it with genius, which, when opportunity offers, immediately brings forth the treasures which have been accumulated in the mind, and applies them to the explanation of the Old Testament, and likewise with judgment, which makes a proper use, and a wise selection of those things, which one intent upon understanding the Old Testament, has always present in his mind.

Obs. 2. There is also another endowment of the mind, in itself most valuable, which is also highly advantageous to an interpreter of the Old Testament. We allude to the sense of beauty, by means of which the person himself readily perceives, and also explains to others what is elegant, sublime, or excellent, in a writer. But, since this sense is not of equal value in regard to all the writings of the Old Testament, and since it conduces more to the perception and explanation of the beauty of things and sentiments that are well understood, than to rightly understanding and interpreting them, therefore we think it proper to abstain, in this place, from a particular consideration of this endowment.

### § 3.

By genius, we here mean, that faculty of the mind, which manifests itself in a ready representation to itself of objects, in promptly comparing them, and in the invention of what is new; which admirable faculty will be more useful to the interpreter of the Old Testament, in proportion to the degree in which it is possessed by him.

Obs. 1. As the interpreter of whom we speak, is to be employed upon the most ancient of all writings, undoubtedly for the understanding and exposition of these, labour, study, and learning, are required; but to be able to bring immediately before his mind when necessary, whatever he has acquired by this means, so as to transfer himself as much as may be, to the age of the writer he is studying, to place himself, as it were, in his circumstances, and to endeavour to think and feel in the same manner with him; all this belongs to that most noble faculty of mind, which appears in the ready representation of things to the understanding, and which we designate by the name of genius.

Obs. 2. To the same faculty of mind must be referred the prompt comparison of various things. It is indeed necessary that one should have stored in his memory those things, by instituting a comparison

with which he may illustrate an author; but to make such a comparison, he will be much more capable who excels in genius. This power of genius, for instance, is seen in explaining the words and phrases which occur rarely or only once, by instituting a proper comparison of them with each other, whether similar, or related words or phrases, such as the Hebrew language itself, or its allied dialects supply. It is seen, too, in the illustration of an argument or poem, by the collation with historical facts, where that is possible. And it is observable in such an exposition of manners and observances, as the study of antiquity suggests.

Obs. 3. In fine, the inventive faculty which peculiarly belongs to superior genius is often highly useful to the interpreter of the Old Testament. A person endowed with such a genius, for example, one while attaches to a word a meaning which nowhere else occurs, but which every one immediately perceives to be a most happy conjecture: at another, he so well developes the sense of whole passages which other interpreters have left doubtful, that he has no doubt himself, and easily convinces others of his having felicitously attained the true meaning of the writer; and again, when either a trifling or great error is either suspected or proved by just arguments to exist in the text, and when no other means of emendation is accessible, he so changes the reading through conjecture solely, that every competent judge will readily acknowledge, that, if the author did not write in the manner conjectured, it is searcely possible to doubt or deny that the emendation is at least quite congruous to the context, and to the genius and object of the writer.

Obs. 4. Although the all-wise God, the author of nature, has not given an equal portion of genius to all, it does not, however, follow that those on whom a less share of this gift has been bestowed, ought not to apply themselves to the interpretation of the Old Testament, if, from the nature of their office, or from inclination, they are otherwise disposed to this kind of study. For, by assiduous labour, there have been men who attained the praise of correct and learned expositors without much genius. The greater superiority of genius, however, which any one possesses, ought to render him the more cautious, lest either by the abuse of the readiness of his genius, he incur the just reproach of temerity, or, making light of the stores of learning, he imagine that he can effect that by genius alone, which he cannot arrive at without great labour, and the employment of the aids of learning. And let every one who wishes to bestow his labour on the interpretation of the Old Testament, so employ that portion of genius which he has got from nature, as that, while conscious to himself, he may also shew to others, on every proper occasion, that he has not received it in vain-

### § 4.

Another natural faculty of the mind, and no less excellent in its nature, is called judgment;

by means of which, whatever regards the interpretation of the Old Testament, is wisely selected and applied to the best use.

Obs. 1. Every one must readily perceive that judgment is of great value in the interpretation of every writing, particularly of the more ancient compositions. It indeed has a great share in determining what meaning of words and phrases is most agreeable to the context, as frequently their signification is so various, that at first sight one cannot know which ought to be preferred in any particular passage. And it holds universally, that whatever one's own genius has suggested in the explication of words and phrases, or other interpreters who are consulted, may have brought forward, judgment subjects all this to its deliberation, and carefully separates what is true from what is false, what is probable from what is not. In the exposition of writings, too, it is the business of judgment to discriminate between what is conformable to ancient and what to more recent times: and the more any one excels in this faculty of the mind, the greater order, perspicuity, and conciseness will he attempt in all that he produces for the purpose of illustration; and the more will be guard himself both from such inept fictions of imagination, as will be rejected by the wise, and likewise from a vain ostentation of erudition, which frequently fatigues and creates disgust, while the right and proper use of learning allures, delights, keeps attentive, and produces conviction.

Obs. 2. The power of judgment is principally seen in the right and proper application of the critical art, which is as it were its peculiar sphere. For, by the appellation Critic, a word of Greek origin, is signified, one who is skilful in judging. The criticism then, of which we here treat, consists in the faculty of judging whether the received reading is correct, and if suspected or corrupted, what should be preferred to it: and it is also the business of the same criticism to determine whether any book be genuine, or any part of it properly ascribed to the author or age to which it is assigned or otherwise. It is easy, therefore, to be seen that no one is a good critic who is not possessed of a correct judgment.

Obs. 3. From the observations we have made, it is evident, that judgment is of admirable utility to the interpreter of the Old Testament, and that, in some respects, it is more valuable than genius, and of greater authority. For it is much more guided by wisdom and swayed by reason; and it weighs so as to approve or condemn what is suggested by genius, whose too luxuriant energy it is able occasionally to restrain and correct. This most excellent gift of nature, although not equally extensive in all, seems, however, to be distributed less unequally than genius, which exists in a high degree only in a few; while to most men a certain natural skill in judging has been conceded, in which many more would excel, would they rightly cultivate and exercise it. For industry enlarges, age matures, and use and exercise sharpen, polish, and bring to perfection this faculty of nature; and experience also shews, that by indefatigable and rightly conducted study, the power of judgment is so increased that it seems to owe no less to this than to nature.

# § 5.

The right use of both the natural faculties, which we have separately considered, conduces highly to that acuteness in understanding, and to that perspicuousness in explaining, which are universally allowed to constitute the excellence of an interpreter.

Obs. 1. Since no one is able sufficiently to explain that to others which he himself does not fully understand, it is evident that there is required, and held to be necessary in a good interpreter, an acuteness of understanding-that is, that he be ready in perceiving, or at least in investigating, by the use of necessary aids, the true meaning of the composition to which he applies himself. But indeed this acuteness of understanding is not manifested solely in the perception of the meaning contained in the words, but sometimes in the investigation merely of the probable meaning; since it may often happen to every good interpreter, particularly when employed on the most ancient books, that however rightly he may employ the aids to correct interpretation, he may yet either be at a loss, or deceived in the understanding of a passage. But, should either of these happen, who

will for that reason deny acuteness of understanding to him, who demonstrates on other occasions his possession of this power in his whole manner of interpreting? As to what respects perspicuousness in explaining, it altogether consists in this, that a person shall bring forward, in a proper manner, whatever, after due inquiry, he thinks will principally conduce to the understanding of any passage or of an entire book.

Obs. 2. This acuteness of understanding and perspicuousness in explaining, without which no one can be reckoned a good interpreter, are principally derived, partly from genius, and partly from judgment. Acuteness of understanding is not indeed so much manifested in what is plain and perspicuous, but rather in what is more or less intricate or difficult to be understood. Therefore, as in acuteness of understanding there are two requisites: the first, that one see difficulties and perceive their nature, and the second, that he labour as much as possible to master them: in each of these requisites great power both of genius and judgment exists. In the books of the Old Testament many difficulties occur, and not a few things likewise, which, from our being accustomed from our early youth to the reading of these books, we seem to ourselves to understand, while in reality we do not understand them. Now, then, the more a person is possessed of a happy genius, the more easily will he, throwing aside as it were, and shaking off the puerile notions which he had imbibed, read the Old Testament in such a manner as if he had never read it before, and the more easily will be observe and perceive what is obscure and difficult in this or that

passage, and consequently will the more readily seize on what may be the means of overcoming these difficulties. And the more any one is possessed of superiority of judgment, the more will he guard against creating to himself difficulties where none exist, and the more justly will he estimate real difficulties: and, in general, whatever means genius and learning, and experience and exercise afford for overcoming them, the better and more correctly will be apply their aids.— As to what respects perspicuousness in explaining, that will appear partly from the translation given, and partly from the exposition of the words and things. In making a good translation, either of a particular passage or of a whole book, how great the efficacy of judgment is, every one must easily understand, who will consider what great discrimination is required in order to express, as far as possible, the mind of any writer justly and agreeably to the genius of the language into which the translation is made. why should we not assign to genius also some part in this process? For the more prompt and cultivated, and at the same time luxuriant this faculty is, will it not the more assist in expressing as nearly the force of certain, particularly poetical passages, as the diversity of the language will permit? To the illustration also of any writing, every one must readily conclude, from the very nature of the thing, that no less useful assistance is derived both from genius and from judgment as to the understanding of it. As often too as reasons are to be brought forward by the interpreter to justify his exposition, in discovering and urging these, from whatever source

they may be derived, the force of genius is of the greatest use, through which he both easily brings before his mind what may serve his purpose, and readily institutes judicious comparisons, and, in fine, felicitously illustrates what may seem dark and abstruse. But likewise in bringing forward the same reasons in a manner fitted to convince, in making a prudent selection of them, and in arranging them in a neat and perspicuous manner, it requires no argument to prove that this will be done in a very superior manner by those who are possessed of a sound and correct judgment.

#### CHAPTER II.

OF THE PRINCIPAL VIRTUES OF THE MIND, WHICH AN INTERPRETER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT OUGHT TO POSSESS, PARTICULARLY IN THIS AGE.

# § 1.

It is by no means of little consequence in what spirit one applies himself to the interpretation of the Old Testament, and occupies himself in it; and consequently there are some virtues, of which the more one is possessed, the more will he be enabled to employ himself aright in this study, and in a manner more adapted to the present age.

Obs. I. There is a connection, and as it were an affinity, between the endowments of the understanding and the virtues of the mind. For although there is neither always the greater love of moral rectitude and goodness in a man in proportion to the superiority of his intellectual talents, nor from the greater desire of virtue which any one manifests, are we entitled immediately to ascribe to him an excellence in mental faculties: yet virtue and perspicacity of intellect, intimately conjoined in the same person, mutually assist, strengthen, sharpen, and perfect each other. Here, however, we do not mean the love of virtue generally, but certain peculiar good and laudable affections of the mind; such as the highest ardour for knowledge, a greater propensity towards that which is useful than that which is dazzling, an ingenuous love of liberty, which repudiates the slavery of prejudice, and many others which are highly valuable for conducting properly the study of all the sciences. For, as it is of no little consequence with respect to these sciences, whether one be furnished by nature with the more excellent endowments of the mind or not: so also the more any one possesses a mind of a higher and more elevated cast, and in all respects better adapted to them, the more successfully will be labour in them, and produce the greater advantage to himself and others.

Obs. 2. This being the case, we by no means consider it of little moment, what are the powers and state of mind possessed by the person who employs himself in the reading and study of the Old Testament, but are convinced that there are certain vir-

tues exceedingly useful to its right interpretation; and this experience will readily confirm. Therefore we lay down this position, that as many requisites are indispensable in this study, an interpreter ought to labour to acquire that spirit which the importance, the dignity, and the difficulty of the subject require; and, on this account, it does not seem inconsistent with the object of the present work briefly to pass in review the chief commendable virtues and affections of the mind, which, in this our age, will more particularly have the effect of rendering an interpreter of the Old Testament distinguished.

## § 2.

The first and most useful, nay indispensable virtue of the mind to a good interpreter of the Old Testament, we account to be a due veneration for the books which are contained in this sacred volume.

Obs. 1. After the Babylonish captivity, the Jews began to hold in great veneration their religion, which before they had esteemed very lightly. In process of time they increased this veneration to a superstitious degree, and perverted it, by transferring this excessive and superstitious veneration of their religion to the sacred books themselves, nay even to the very language in which they were written, which finally introduced a minute, absurd, and monstrous

method of interpretation. For they became accustomed not only to hold in veneration the Hebrew language, and also its letters, but its points also, as sacred and of divine origin. They therefore held that each word must have in it the whole of those meanings which it could signify, and that, from those meanings, it was required to evolve the deepest mysteries which the Divine Spirit, who inspired the writers, had involved in them; and they are constantly inculcating that it is unlawful to make any change, even the most trifling, because the industry of the Masorites has sufficiently fixed the text in all respects: and by indulging in the most silly fictions of a diseased imagination, they have been so far, by this their veneration for the sacred books, from adding to the honour and dignity of them, that, on the contrary, they are justly reckoned to have detracted from these very highly.

Obs. 2. The opinion which many Christians for a long time entertained regarding the sanctity of the books of the Old Testament, though less superstitious, must not, however, be held to be altogether free from superstition. For although they did not conform themselves in all things to the Jewish trifling, they yet, in imitation of the Jewish masters, believed that the Hebrew language was sacred, and that there was a divine power in the words themselves, nay even, that certain most holy mysteries lay conecaled in innumerable passages under this exterior rind. Even after the restoration of letters, and the blessed reformation of religion, a veneration almost too high remained long among not a few, who doubted

not that each word had been divinely inspired and communicated to the sacred writers, and religiously abstained from critical emendation, as unlawful, profane, and impious.

Obs. 3. For some time past, however, the audacity of a great number has taught very differently concerning the dignity of the books of the Old Testament. For not only have they denied any sort of inspiration or peculiar assistance from God in the writing of these books, but even that in them any really divine revelations were contained; and they have affirmed confidently, that they contained nothing at all which ought to be attributed to any extraordinary information given by God, or which ought to be accounted miraculous. From which new method of interpretation, which we have combated in the sixth chapter of the former section, it has happened, that wherever it prevails, much of the dignity and utility of the study employed on the Old Testament has been diminished among those engaged in publicly teaching religion.

Obs. 4. Having, in the place just quoted above, vindicated a divine intervention in the ancient Mosaic religion, and the circumstances relating to it, and in the writing of the books themselves of the Old Testament, and at the same time defined the proper notion which we ought to form regarding this divine intervention, it will readily be understood what is the sort of veneration which we would commend in an interpreter of those books in our times. It is that which holds a middle course between the extravagant estimation of the Jews, and even of many Christians,

particularly of former times, and the reckless licentiousness of the more recent philologers. He who keeps to this middle and highly commendable course, will not only seem to himself to see in each of the expressions and words, the words of God himself, and not merely to hear every where the words of men, but will remember that he is reading those books in which is contained the doctrine whose authors had God for their immediate guide and assistant; nay, whose writers are not only in themselves most trustworthy, but likewise, as far as was necessary, were divinely preserved free from error.—He who thus justly estimates these books, will also be persuaded, that in miracles those laws enacted by God, the author of nature, were not subverted; but whenever he observes clearly in the relation of events, that powers of nature were employed by God in bringing about events differing from the ordinary course of nature, there, full of veneration, will be adore the divine wisdom; and will not endeavour every where to bend, by every mode of interpretation, and by fictions of a luxuriant imagination, the miracles which are related, to the ordinary course of nature.-Besides, he who wishes to render due veneration to the divine writings, will not every where seek for mysteries, and obtrude them on the authors who had none such in their minds, neither will be endeavour to infringe upon the natural force of the words; but, following those sound rules which have been justly established for the interpretation of other writings, will incline in no respect to detract from the dignity of the writers, or the importance of their matter .-

Finally, a due veneration for these books will not indeed induce one to start back from conjectural criticism, as if it were laying profane hands on a writing which, as it has come down to us, is divine and most sacred; but so to exercise it when necessary, as that by its means he may advance the dignity of the sacred writers.

## § 3.

The second virtue, which is required of a good interpreter of the Old Testament, closely connected too with that of which we have just treated, and very necessary in the circumstances of our times, is what we would call true liberality, through which one shews himself free from all party bias.

Obs. 1. There is no word which, for some time past, a number of the cultivators of sacred philology have more delighted to employ, and none which has been more abused than *liberality*. By this term is meant, that virtue in an interpreter, which incites him to shew himself free from all party spirit, and shaking off the yoke of prejudices, enables him unshackled to pursue that path which alone he considers becoming in a candid interpreter. All those more recent interpreters, therefore, who, ridding themselves of the chains of all theological slavery, pursue a more

free course than was formerly trodden, are desirous of being distinguished for this virtue. But there are many among them, who, whilst they rush headlong into the most unbridled licentiousness, seem to themselves highly liberal, and wish to be so esteemed by others. As on this account these persons have brought the name of liberality into disrepute, it will be worth while to define with some degree of accuracy what we understand by true liberality.

Cbs. 2. That genuine liberality which appears to us a highly commendable virtue, in interpreting the Old Testament, exists, when one furnished with those endowments of mind which constitute a good interpreter of these books, or, at least, cultivating aright those which he has received from nature, neither follows servilely the old method of interpretation, nor eagerly adopts the new; but interprets with freedom and prudence, without allowing himself to be carried away by any party feeling. For he is not at once to be reckoned a liberal interpreter of the Old Testament, who delights to bring forward, and is immoderately delighted with every ingenious imagination, which may present a specious and dazzling appearance to the mind. Such interpretations, frequently, when examined by a sound judgment, are found to be merely specious, and to have in them nothing solid. Neither is he entitled to the honourable appellation of a liberal interpreter, who almost always deserts, disapproves, undervalues, and finds fault with the old mode of interpretation, while, on the other hand, he admires and praises solely, and adopts anxiously, and follows with a blind impulse, as it were, every thing which has the commendation of novelty. By acting thus, while he avoids being carried along by the love of antiquity, he is altogether led away by the desire of novelty, and while he throws away one set of chains, he forges to himself new ones, with which he is wonderfully delighted. In fine, liberality of interpretation refuses not to entertain as its companion and ally, a complete veneration for the books of the Old Testament, as sacred. Nay, indeed, since in these books, both in respect to their contents and composition, there is something divine; to be unwilling to acknowledge this when interpreting them, or to endeavour by every means to deprive them of this distinction, deserves not the name of liberality, but of licentiousness. True liberality, therefore, guards itself, indeed, from too excessive a veneration for the books of the Old Testament, while, however, at the same time, it dreads incurring the charge of levity and rashness.

Obs. 3. What has now been said, may suffice regarding the true nature of liberality, as it respects the interpretation of the Old Testament. And, indeed, this genuine liberality, and that just veneration for the Old Testament, of which we have treated in a former section, have such a connection with each other, that they cannot be disjoined, and are qualifications differing more in name than in reality. How useful, however, this liberality is to an interpreter, and how commendable in him, must be very evident; as he who neither suffers himself to be bound by the chains, if I may so speak, of antiquity, nor of novelty,

by avoiding, as far as possible, in a prudent manner, what, on either side, is extreme or excessive, will best consult, both the dignity of the sacred books, and the advantage of his own age.

## § 4.

A third virtue, which is of the greatest use to an interpreter of the Old Testament, is patient endurance of labour.

Obs. 1. As the difficulty of interpreting the Old Testament aright, is, on the whole great, and as very many things must be known and attended to by the interpreter, no little labour, certainly, is required of him, who is desirous of attaining to any excellence in it; the more patient of labour, therefore, that any one is, the more may be hope for more valuable fruits from his labour.

Obs. 2. This patient endurance of labour is most useful to all who wish to apply particularly to the study of the Old Testament, whether nature has bestowed on them great endowments, or been more parsimonious in that respect. For, as no poet, or even orator, is born perfect, he whom nature has endowed with a capacity of attaining in time to the reputation of a perfect orator or poet, will only arrive at the perfection of this character, by long continued labour; so likewise, nay, much more will he, whom

nature has qualified for becoming a consummate interpreter, only attain this honour after long and persevering exertion. For labour both nourishes the genius, and supplies its riches, and is continually adding to the materials which it may with most advantage employ; while it forms and perfects the judgment, and collects for it, every day, more aids which it may wisely make use of. It is, therefore, the cause why the more any one excels in natural endowments the more will be become eminent in that nice perspieacity, both in understanding and explaining, by which a good interpreter is distinguished. Nay, indeed, intense labour, although it cannot altogether supply or quite compensate for the defects of nature, can so aid an inferior genius, as, in process of time, to amplify, in an incredible manner, very moderate powers, and to render them productive of great fruits.

Obs. 3. This patient labour in those who have opportunity and leisure, and a certain propensity of mind to the study of the Old Testament, is highly deserving of commendation, particularly in our times. To most of the interpreters of the Old Testament, indeed, in former ages, no one will find it easy to refuse the praise due to this virtue; but that the same commendation is due to the more recent interpreters, is far from being true. For it can searcely be expressed, how many immature fruits of luxuriant genius, our age has seen brought forth, which, through novelty alone, have appeared splendid, while they seemed quite insipid to the more wise

and skilful. Those, therefore, who have proposed to themselves, the imitation of the patient labour of the more ancient interpreters, of whom, not a few obtained celebrity, and who endeavour to employ in adaptation to the circumstances of the present age, the many more and superior aids to correct interpretation, which are in their hands, will not find wanting the means, in the immense multitude of things which remain to be done, for illustrating the Old Testament, by which they may deserve well of the public, and of the sacred books themselves, and by which, likewise, they may obtain the highly desirable praise of industry, from the wisest and best judges.

## § 5.

Lastly, the being possessed with a true sense of human weakness, will be of no mean service to an interpreter of the Old Testament.

Obs. 1. From what we have already said, it will be easily seen, that such a sense of human weakness as will dispose to patient labour, is considered by us as necessary. We therefore highly reprobate that unnatural state of feeling which debilitates the mind and renders it incapable of attempting any thing difficult, and only praise and highly commend that state of mind, which makes one, while he is not sparing of his labour, always to perceive in what he is deficient. and continually to remember, that being a man, he can neither understand, nor explain, nor define, nor reduce to the level of his capacity, nor render a reason for, every thing.

Obs. 2. It is not difficult to shew why such a sense of human weakness is most useful to an interpreter of the Old Testament. For, when animated by this feeling, he neither altogether trusts to himself, nor will be acquiesce immediately in every view that is presented to him, but will endeavour to contemplate a subject on every side, and will be desirous of not omitting any means, by which he may properly explain, if possible, whatever is obscure and difficult. This feeling, therefore, most useful in the study of every science, will render an interpreter of the Old Testament, cautious, prudent, very attentive in observing where difficulties lie, and in every thing, not too precipitate. Farther, it will be the cause of his never being contented with any acquisitions in knowledge he may have already made, but will actuate him more and more every day, with an insatiable ardour for learning, and will make him anxious to endeavour continually to increase and perfect his acquisitions. It will also be the cause of his never forget. ting that his labours are bestowed on the most ancient of all books, which are, too, by their very subject, distinguished from human writings; neither will be be astonished or offended at finding in them, not a few things which are extremely puzzling, and not

easily explained, so as to be, in all things, equally satisfactory to all. In many cases, therefore, he will ingenuously confess his ignorance, and, in the hope that time will perhaps open clearer views, he will frequently not wish to decide definitively; and in many other cases, being rightly persuaded that a peculiar intervention of God must be acknowledged, he will not be of opinion, that he can reduce every circumstance to ordinary causes; bearing continually in remembrance, that weak and blind mortals, in the things constantly before their eyes, and in the ordinary course of nature, are unable to investigate the laws which the divine providence pursues.

Obs. 3. This virtue is the more to be commended, from there being many in the present day, who seem to be destitute of it. For, among not a few of the more recent interpreters of the Old Testament, who have struck out a new path for themselves, there is so little modesty, that one who will take a more accurate view of their trifling performances, and observe how confidently and overbearingly they pronounce their dicta, as from the tripod of an oracle, will find himself sometimes inclined to smile, and at other times to be filled with indignation. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that the whole of the more ancient interpreters, can, by no means, be acquitted of the charge of too much arrogance; but, such is the contagion of this vice at the present time, as to be greatly opposed to sound interpretation, and highly pernicious to the dignity of the sacred books. Every one, therefore, who attempts the

interpretation of the Old Testament, ought anxiously to guard against allowing himself to be tinctured or contaminated by the pollution of this contagion, and ought ever to bear in mind, that a modest opinion of one's self, is a virtue highly becoming, in an interpreter of the Old Testament, and one too of the greatest excellence and utility.

## PART FIRST.

### SECTION THIRD.

OF THOSE SUBSIDIARY STUDIES WHICH ARE AN OR-NAMENT AND AID TO AN ACCOMPLISHED INTER-PRETER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

#### CHAPTER FIRST.

OF THE STUDY OF ANCIENT LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY.

## § 1.

The study of ancient literature (*Human. Litt.*) considered in itself, is highly valuable to an interpreter of the Old Testament, but particularly so from the circumstances of the present age.

Obs. 1. It remains for us to speak of some acquirements, which are valuable as ornaments, and aids to an interpreter of the Old Testament: which, indeed, though we stile them subsidiary, we do not wish to be understood as if an accomplished interpreter of the present day could easily do without them; but we assert, that though perhaps at first sight they may perhaps appear less necessary, they are, however, of the greatest utility. Among these

we reckon the study of ancient literature, and of philosophy, and also some other particular branches of knowledge, which are frequently of the greatest use to an interpreter.

- Obs. 2. Of what value the excellent productions of Greece and Rome, which have deservedly received their name of the Humaniores Litera, from humanity itself, are to the interpretation of the Old Testament, history abundantly evidences. For, when the literature of these nations was generally neglected by Christians, and even by Christian teachers, the state of the interpretation of the sacred volume was most wretched; and the more the ignorance of this species of learning generally prevailed, the mode of interpreting the Old Testament grew worse and worse. The first dawning, too, of a better mode of interpretation must be dated from the time when reviving literature began to dispel the gloom of the horrid night of superstition. And should ever again the calamity overtake the Christian world, of this learning becoming almost every where neglected, a barbarous mode of interpretation, most hostile to the understanding of the Old Testament, would certainly ensue.
- Obs. 3. Not only does history demonstrate the great utility of ancient literature to the interpretation of the Old Testament, but it is easy to prove the same thing from the very nature and genius of this kind of learning.
- 1. For, as the study of this literature has the admirable quality of preparing the mind for the right cultivation of every kind of learning, it is also of much

use in rightly conducting the interpretation of the Old Testament. For, as it tends generally to cultivate, ennoble, and exalt the mind, to excite and nourish the genius, to exercise and perfect the judgment, and to loosen and break the force of prejudices, it becomes most powerfully efficacious in conducting to a candid, liberal, and satisfactory interpretation of the Old Testament.

- 2. The more prepared by the cultivation of ancient literature a person comes to the study of the Old Testament, the more will he bring with him to that study the habit of treating and interpreting ancient books: and the more he has learned to throw himself back to the times, and to enter into the genius of the Greek and Roman writers, the less difficulty will he find in reading and interpreting the much more ancient Hebrew books, so as to pay due attention to their times and genius.
- 3. From the reading and study of these authors, too, not a few advantages are derived for the interpretation of the Old Testament. For, however dissimilar these languages may be, there are still many things to be found in the Greek and Latin languages which may be usefully applied both with respect to the etymological nature, and different uses of some words in the Hebrew language, and also for the better understanding of some phrases. But, besides, in illustrating not a few things, which occur in the Old Testament, these Greek and Latin writers afford advantages by no means contemptible. For, not to instance in other things which may afterwards with propriety be touched upon, the example of the best

interpreters has clearly shewn how much pleasing and useful illustration of certain actions, laws, and manners may be derived from a comparison of the antiquities of other nations.

4. Lastly, to the study of the Hebrew poets in particular, may be advantageously joined the study of the Greek and Latin poets. For a comparison of those ancient poets is not a little valuable for better perceiving and illustrating the nature and force of the Hebrew poetical expressions and images; and for this purpose the Greek poets are particularly excellent, as the greater part of them, both from their greater antiquity, and from the similarity and contiguity of their climate, approach nearer to the Hebrew poets. But as it universally holds, that in studying all kinds of poetry in a poetical manner, a nice sense of the beautiful is of the greatest service; for exciting, nourishing, forming aright, and guiding this sense, who has ever doubted of the immense use to be derived from an acquaintance with the Greek and Latin poets? But although a person, endued with a proper sense of the beautiful, on instituting a comparison of each of these poets and of the Hebrew poets, will perceive less perfect cultivation and art in the latter than in the former; he will yet universally observe among the Hebrew poets a greater sublimity of diction, and a majesty of conception, which is highly remarkable in the sacred writers, and redounds much to their honour.

Obs. 4. As then ancient literature is highly useful to the study of the Old Testament, it is certainly much to be wished, that as many as apply themselves

to this study should also apply themselves strenuously to ancient literature. He therefore ought to be reckoned a sound counsellor to a theologian, part of whose duty it is to study the Old Testament, who shall advise him to bestow all that time on ancient literature which can be spared from the immensity of that multitude of other things, of which he must acquire the knowledge: and that not only at the time when he commences that course of study, by which he is to prepare and qualify himself for performing aright afterwards the duties of the most sacred office, but likewise during the whole course of these studies; nay even that he should not neglect or omit this literature when he shall have to perform the weighty duties of a Christian teacher. For this pleasing and valuable literature, besides that it constantly affords some alleviation of the most difficult labours, will be of the greatest service for the better understanding of the sacred volume, and in particular the Old Testament, which is highly valuable to him in the exercise of his office. And this ought to be the more urged in our age, because more and greater aids, for the attainment of this valuable literature, particularly in our own country, are now in our power, and because it is more advantageous, and more required by the circumstances of our times, that an interpreter of the sacred volume should, by a more refined manner of treating its books, endeavour by every means to consult their honour and dignity.

∮ 2.

Besides the study of Greek and Latin literature, which is most useful to prepare one for a natural and just mode of interpreting the Old Testament, the study of philosophy is not a little useful for the same object.

Obs. 1. When we here speak of the study of philosophy, we do not understand the whole of that part of human knowledge generally known under that name, but only that part of it which teaches to think rightly and to conduct aright all the processes of the mind. This was called by the ancients Dialectics, or the manner and science of reasoning, " which," as Cicero in his Tuscul. Quæst. b. v. 25, says, "flows and is diffused through all the parts of knowledge, defines a subject, divides it into its parts, connects consequences, draws just conclusions, and separates truth from falsehood." It therefore requires no proof that philosophy, in so far as it teaches us to use aright the faculties of our minds, and to direct them properly, is, in all cases, most useful to the theologian in respect to the doctrines of religion, and for the right investigation and proper communication of them to others; not only of those doctrines which may be investigated by the aid of reason alone, but also of those which are derived from Scripture. It is not, however, so immediately evident what is its value in

the interpretation of the Old Testament. Let us therefore now observe what may principally deserve our notice on this point.

- Obs. 2. He then who shall have rightly studied the philosophy of which we speak, not so as merely to retain in his memory the rules of the art, but rather he who has learned to think and reason aright, will reap from it the most excellent fruits for the interpretation of the Old Testament when he applies himself to it.
- 1. We have already said, that the study of philosophy, rightly conducted, is admirably adapted to form the judgment, which ought to be cultivated with the utmost care by every interpreter of sacred writ. For nothing is more generally efficacious in exciting that perception of truth, which we vulgarly denominate common sense, if it be latent in the mind, or to polish it if uncultivated, or further to sharpen or perfect it in the person on whom nature has bestowed a more than ordinary share of it.
- 2. When one does not merely apply himself to the words, but endeavours to understand and express the sentiments and mind of these writers; and also oecupies himself in explaining facts, and where reasoning occurs, cautiously inquires into its nature and force—the right use of philosophy, in all the doctrines, opinions, or arguments which he meets with, will keep him always mindful of the remote age on which he is employed, and will make him endeavour to guard against attributing to it any thing not congruous to its nature and genius.
  - 3. But even in the explication of words philoso-

phy is by no means useless. In saying this, we do not wish to be understood as recommending subtle philosophical disquisitions regarding the use and meaning of Hebrew words, or a accommodating their proper significations to philosophical views. For as the Hebrew language seems to reach back to the highest antiquity, and even to the infancy of the human race, and as far as concerns its peculiar nature, remained, as long as it continued a living language, quite unchanged; true and genuine philosophy will lead one carefully to attend to the very great antiquity and the peculiar infantile simplicity of this language, and to adapt to this his grammatical expositions, and not to seek for the primary meaning of its words in those notions which are abstruce or abstract. and separated from our senses, but in those which are derived from things falling under their cognizance, and frequently also from some natural sounds, which mankind have endeavoured to express and imitate.

4. In the last place, true philosophy conduces not a little to foster those virtues, which in our times particularly ought to be wished for and cultivated by an interpreter of the Old Testament. Thus, it is the part of a philosopher to account unworthy of an ingenuous mind every thing which has in it a trace of superstition, and to preserve himself pure, as far as possible, from its contamination: whilst, at the same time, it is his part also to treat every thing agreeably to its own particular nature; and consequently

a In the original, "aut proprias notiones ad philosophicas notiones exigi oportere."

not to account divine and human things on the same level: true philosophy therefore, which teaches to observe a just medium in all things, will dispose to that proper veneration for the books of the Old Testament which their sacredness requires. In the same way it leads one also to true liberality. For as it is hostile to all extremes, so likewise it cares not what the ancients or what the moderns teach, but only what is right and just and true; and therefore contemns and despises indignantly the chains of either party, by which one becomes servilely bound. Consequently the interpreter under the influence of true philosophy, conscious to himself of his real love for truth and religion, will not suffer himself, either by the clamours of those whose judgment is obscured by an excessive veneration for antiquity, or by the sneers of those who are carried away by a blind love of novelty, to be prevented or restrained from stedfastly following, at all times, what he is persuaded is alone right and true. Besides, the more completely a man's mind is imbued with the precepts of philosophy, the more will he be patient of labour. For this is the excellent fruit of true philosophy, that it excites and compels us continually to cultivate the mind, and to perfect and augment more and more every day the endowments of nature and the acquirements of learning; and whilst it shews us the best way by which we may attain these objects, it impels us to avoid no labour, but to exert all our powers to accomplish the utmost of which we are capable. Finally, true philosophy is not to be supposed useless in fostering in us a genuine sense of

human weakness. We know indeed that the philosophy of many moderns, if it does not absolutely lay down precepts of a directly opposite nature, yet certainly has had the effect of rendering men more proud and presuming than they ought to be. But without entering into the tenets of this philosophy, we hesitate not to affirm, that right philosophy, or that which is adapted to and built as it were upon human nature, must render a man at all times conscious and never unmindful of his very circumscribed and infirm nature, and consequently modest, and averse from all pride and arrogance; in a word, such an one as will not, in divine writings or things, be led by a blind faith, nor will he, on the other hand, abstain from investigating them, but will, at the same time, be able to restrain himself, and will not imagine that he can measure and square all things by the rule of his own weak capacity.

Obs. 3. From the observations we have made in this chapter, it appears that ancient literature and philosophy harmoniously conspire to form a good interpreter of the Old Testament. It is indeed notorious, that not unfrequently literary men and philosophers disagree greatly, and that each of these parties is possessed with such an attachment to their peculiar branch of knowledge, as to contemn the other and inveigh bitterly against it. And, indeed, as the study of a barren and imaginary literature is inconsistent with the pursuit of a liberal and enlightened philosophy, so is the study of a barbarous and scholastic philosophy with the pursuit of polished learning. But these branches of knowledge, when studied

aright, are by no means opposed; but, on the contrary, are happily linked together, and mutually assist and perfect each other; and a true lover of literature derives as great advantage from sound philosophy, as a genuine philosopher derives from the cultivation of literature. In the interpretation of the Old Testament, both these studies are happily conjoined, and, provided they be rightly conducted, mutually assist each other, and are nearly of equal value in forming such an interpreter of the Old Testament as our times in an especial manner require.

#### CHAPTER SECOND.

OF SOME OTHER BRANCHES OF KNOWLEDGE, THE STUDY OF WHICH IS USEFUL FOR THE INTERPRE-TATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

## § 1.

Among the branches of knowledge which are of signal utility to an interpreter of the Old Testament, we reckon, above all things, ancient history; not only the domestic history of the Hebrew nation itself, but likewise that of other nations, particularly in so far as it may be intimately connected with the affairs of this people.

Obs. 1. As a great part of the Old Testament is historical, the study of the domestic history of the Hebrews is necessarily contained in the study of the Old Testament itself: we shall, therefore, afterwards treat in another place of the interpretation of the historical writers of the Old Testament in particular. Here, however, it will not be useless to make a few remarks, which are principally referable to two heads. The one is, that we can derive little or no light to the ancient history of the Hebrews from the writers of the other nations of antiquity, because they contain only very few things relating to it, and these mixed with the most absurd fables; such, for example, as those from Trogus Pompeius, related by Justin xxxvi. 2. But, as the history of the Hebrews, contained in the books of the Old Testament, ends near to the time of their return from the Babylonish captivity, it may be completed partly from the first book of Maccabees, which is held by all to be of great authority; but principally from the very noble work of Josephus on Jewish antiquities, which, if prudently consulted, is the best source from which, next to the sacred volume, the ancient history of the Hebrews may be derived. In the second place, we wish it to be observed, that an accurate knowledge of this history gives some aid to the better understanding of certain writings which are not historical. For, besides that not unfrequently in some parts of both the prose and poetical compositions, allusion is made to other more ancient events; there are not a few poems, particularly those of David, whose historical occasion the more surely we investigate, the

more correct will be our explication of them. In the collection of the Psalms, there are to be found some poems which must be referred to the late age of the Maccabees, and must be explained from the supposition of that fact. There are also many predictions of the prophets, which receive no little illustration from a knowledge of the Jewish affairs in later times, which they predict.

Obs. 2. But, in general, the history of the other nations of antiquity, rightly and judiciously applied, may be useful in more ways than one to the interpreter of the Old Testament. For each nation has something peculiar to itself; yet, in this diversity of nations, we may always see mankind much alike in nature and disposition: the observation, therefore, of both their diversity and similitude, which the history of ancient nations supplies, is of no small value in enabling one to form a better judgment of many of the sayings and actions of the Hebrews, and, in every case for assisting in the explanation of the Hebrew history unprejudicedly. There is, besides this effect, pleasing in itself and also valuable, flowing from the study of ancient history, that we are enabled to understand and observe how nations originated, grew considerable, and came to ruin, and that we can, with probability, investigate the immediate causes, by which the various vicissitudes and fates of nations were brought about, and by which the different condition of each may be explained. Neither will the interpreter of the Old Testament recoil from disquisitions of this sort when studying the affairs of the Hebrew nation, as if they were at variance with that peculiar

divine government, which we must acknowledge to have had place among them. For since, not even in miracles, as we have already observed, s. i. c. vi. § 5, obs. 3, must God be supposed to have departed from the fixed laws of nature, his peculiar divine government of that nation, therefore, by no means interfered with or took away natural causes: but whilst God left to these all their power, he directed them wisely and agreeably to his own purposes. This wisdom, therefore, of the Almighty, the interpreter will be able to display the more clearly and evidently, in proportion as he has, with superior sagacity, when occasion offers, investigated and demonstrated to others the immediate causes of events.

Obs. 3. In the history of nations external to the Hebrews, there are some of them which particularly deserve the attention of the interpreter of sacred writ, from the frequent mention of them occurring in Scripture, and from their affairs being intimately connected with those of the Hebrew nation. Some of these are not even named by the historians of the other nations, for example, the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites; others again more celebrated are frequently spoken of by them; although they by no means give such full accounts of them, as will in all respects satisfy an interpreter of the Old Testament, in every case where mention of them occurs. Every thing, however, regarding the Phenicians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians, who are much celebrated in the history of the Hebrews, and regarding the genius and fates of these nations, should be taken from the best authorities which the interpreter can find adapted to his purpose. These are principally Herodotus, the father of historians among the Greeks, whose authority is now every day more and more being confirmed and established, and Diodorus Siculus, who, although a much more recent author, yet employed the utmost diligence in investigating and relating the affairs of the most ancient nations.

## § 2.

Closely connected with the study of history is that of chronology: which, although by its extent and nature most difficult, and not requiring to be studied throughout by every interpreter, must not, however, be altogether neglected; and in every case it is necessary, as far as may be, that regard be had to the nature of the different periods.

Obs. 1. How arduous, and attended with what insuperable difficulty in more cases than one, the labour which has been undertaken by some, of attempting to reduce to correct chronological order, every thing related in the sacred history, and to bring it accurately to agree with the history of other nations, taking into account the exact lapse of time, no one for whom this treatise is intended can be ignorant. A task of such magnitude, therefore, we neither prescribe nor advise that such should impose upon them-

selves, but rather that they should leave this most troublesome undertaking to those to whom it may be agreeable. Let them be satisfied with making use of the labours of those who have employed the greatest diligence on this point: such as the celebrated Eusebius among the ancients, in his *Chronological Canons*, published long ago by Scaliger, and which have been lately brought from Armenia much more complete and full, and now published. <sup>a</sup>

Obs. 2. Although we do not, therefore, recommend as absolutely necessary the fullest study of sacred and profane ancient chronology to the interpreter of the Old Testament, we do not, however, consider it to be altogether foreign to his duty, nor quite unworthy of his care. For there occur in the sacred history, occasionally, some chronological questions, which an accurate interpreter can by no means pass over or neglect, but in discussing them will employ usefully his genius and judgment, making use at the same time of the best aids. In every case, too, it will be most useful to know, at what time, in the annals of profane history, each one of the sacred writers and celebrated persons lived, and when the most remarkable events happened among the ancient Hebrews: and it is deservedly accounted most valuable to the cause of truth, to have such a respect to the different eras, as to enable one to form a just judgment of the various transactions of the Hebrews, and of their manners and institutions.

a Eusebii Pamphili Chronicorum libri duo, editoribus Angelo Majo et Johanne Zohrabo, Mediol. 1618.

§ 3.

It is also most useful, and connected by the bond of affinity with the study of history, to be well acquainted with ancient geography, both profane and sacred, but particularly the latter; which will be of frequent use to the interpreter of the Old Testament.

Obs. 1. As a right knowledge of the country inhabited by any nation, conduces very much to understanding the history and writings of that nation, so the study of sacred geography is most useful for rightly explaining the history of the Hebrew nation, and likewise many of the writings of every sort which have been published in it. For often the description of any action, or a speech, or a poem, in the Old Testament, cannot in all respects be sufficiently understood, without the assistance of a knowledge of places. The whole of the Mosaic constitution even, and many of its particular parts, are best illustrated from the situation, extent, and nature of the Israelitish country. On this account Josephus, from whom, next to the sacred code, we derive the best knowledge of the history of the Hebrews, will be consulted advantageously by the interpreter of the Old Testament; as he describes the situation of places, whenever it appears necessary. Among the a ncients, Eusebius too, and Jerome in his Onomasticon of Cities and Places, who purposely composed works on sacred geography, deserve to be placed in the first rank in this department by an interpreter. Among the moderns, those are principally to be esteemed, who have with learning and industry given an account of biblical geography, in conjunction with those who have travelled into Palestine, and accurately described its soil and climate.

Obs. 2. Neither ought the study of the geography of other nations to be neglected by the interpreter of the Old Testament, as it is useful for his purpose on many occasions. In particular, he requires to have a competent knowledge of those countries in which the Israelites lived before they occupied Palestine, and likewise of those into which they were afterwards carried into captivity. But frequently, also, other nations and other countries are mentioned in the Old Testament, regarding which, whatever is known may be usefully applied in interpretation. For which purpose, those writers among the ancients, of whom we have already spoken, Josephus, Eusebius, and Jerome, are of some assistance, to whom we here add that most excellent geographer, Strabo: and among the moderns, those travellers who have published a description of their routes, are occasionally of considerable utility. And he who is able to consult the Arabic writers, who have given a geographical description of Asia, Egypt, and the other countries of Africa, will from them derive no mean advantage.

### § 4.

Natural history too, in as far as it relates to the Old Testament, is occasionally not a little useful to its interpretation.

Obs. 1. When we here speak of natural history, we wish the term to be understood in the widest sense so as to embrace other subjects which may, from their nature, be referred to it, such as astronomy and the knowledge of diseases; but which are not generally comprehended under this science.

Obs. 2. Regarding astronomy, very few things are found in the Old Testament; the cause of which is very evident. For although the study of this science began early in the East, and was afterwards much cultivated, the laws of Moses were not favourable to it, as it was indissolubly connected with astrology, or a superstitious contemplation and observation of the stars, such as was intended to be subservient to the detection and discovery of future events. The mention of diseases is very frequent; but almost only of such as are peculiar to the East, and particularly to Palestine.

Obs. 3. As to those things which are usually referred to natural history, many of them occur in the books of the Old Testament. Nothing is more frequent than the mention of animals, trees, and plants of every kind which are peculiar to eastern countries; and from them the Hebrew poets delight to draw

their images. Precious stones, metals, glass, and ivory, are spoken of, and those other things which are most prized in the East; and we find a description of mines highly adorned with poetic imagery in Job, chap. xxviii.

Obs. 4. As often as mention is made of these natural objects, it is generally of great moment to investigate their nature, and in what manner they were employed by human industry. It is therefore useful often to compare what has been said by those of the ancients who have treated of natural history either in whole or in part; the principal of whom are Aristotle, Ælian, and Pliny. Those of the moderns again who should chiefly be consulted, are such as either from their travels in the East, or from other sources, have endeavoured accurately and learnedly to acquire information in order to illustrate the ancient Scriptures.

### § 5.

Lastly, It is commendable in an interpreter of the Old Testament, to direct his attention to the study of ancient manners, laws, institutions, doctrines, and opinions, in as far as may conduce to the better understanding of those books.

Obs. 1. As numerous things occur in almost every one of the writings of the Old Testament, which, whether they relate to the Hebrew people, or to other

nations, seem not a little strange to us, who are accustomed to a very different mode of thinking and acting, an interpreter ought constantly to take these things into account, that he may the better discharge his own immediate function, and defend the honour of the sacred writings.

Obs. 2. For this purpose it will not only be most advantageous to make a proper use of all that can be learned regarding the sacred, civil, or domestic antiquities of the Hebrews, either from the comparing of the sacred books with each other, or through the best foreign aids, but also to attend to whatever has been made known by the inquirers into these subjects respecting the other nations mentioned in the Old Testament. For certainly the better any one is versant in investigating and tracing up to its source the manner of thinking and acting of any of the ancient nations, particularly of the Orientals, and in showing the mode in which the nature of man always proceeds, advancing step by step as it were, and at last attains cultivation, the more easily will he himself be able to understand, and to explain to others the state even of the most ancient ages. But it is sufficient here to have dropped a hint upon this subject, which we shall afterwards illustrate in another place, as far as may seem necessary for the purposes of an interpreter.

#### PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

OF THE

# OLD TESTAMENT.

### PART SECOND.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN GENERAL.

#### SECTION FIRST.

OF THE TRUE MANNER OF INTERPRETING THE OLD TESTAMENT.

# § 1

As what belongs to the interpretation of the Old Testament is partly of a general and partly of a particular nature, according to the diversity of matter and style, it is proper that we should treat of each of these separately; and as all do not follow one and the same method, but some pursue methods extremely dissimilar, it will be of advantage to commence by briefly illustrating these various modes.

Obs. 1. After having explained, in the former part, what things are principally required in our times for

aiding in the right accomplishment of the interpretation of the Old Testament, we now proceed to what belongs to the interpretation itself. This regards either the whole books of the Old Testament generally, or respects the nature of that diversity which is perceivable either in their matter or style. As these two cannot with propriety be conjoined, but require rather to be treated separately, we are inclined to prefer this last mode; and we approve highly of the method which distinguishes the general from the special hermeneutics of the Old Testament, and treats of them separately. But although the extent of each is very great, yet we shall be enabled to treat them more briefly, in proportion to the length and the accuracy permitted by the nature of our undertaking, with which we have already discussed those points which seem to have no small effect on the interpretation of the Old Testament.

Obs. 2. As certain general rules belong to the subject of this second part, which must be observed in the interpretation of almost every individual writer of the Old Testament, these shall be laid down and explained in their order, as far as we shall judge to be necessary. But, before we proceed to this, it will be of use, shortly to review the principal various methods recommended by various interpreters, and candidly to state regarding these, what should be approved, and what rejected.

§ 2.

The allegorical and mystical mode of interpretation, by which a double meaning is assigned to words, which long prevailed, both among Jews and Christians, although it sometimes has its uses, ought deservedly, however, to be rejected, when we inquire, what is the real mind of the writer. But the typical exposition of certain things, we consider to stand on a very different footing.

Obs. 1. It is not necessary here to treat of the Jewish Cabalistical method of interpretation. From what we can see through the darkness and abstruseness of this plan of interpretation, stuffed with the most trifling, nay, monstrous allegories; this, at least, we clearly perceive, that it is altogether such as to be undeserving of being explained or illustrated.

Obs. 2. But there is another kind of allegorical and mystical interpretation, which is rather more tolerable, and seems to be, in some degree, recommended by the authority of the men of great name who have employed it; of all of whom, let one, the Apostle Paul, serve as an example, who has applied it to his own purpose more than once. Let us then see what is the nature of this allegorical and mystical method, and what judgment we ought to form regarding it.

Obs. 3. An allegorical and mystical interpretation, as commonly understood, is that which conjoins with the simple and immediate signification, which the words have in themselves, one more abstruse and remote, which was involved in the words, either by the writers themselves, or by the divine Spirit, by whom they were inspired. But this definition may be supposed to embrace in it the description of every sort of double sense, of the grammatical itself even, or literal, as it is called, and also of the typical. But we do not wish to include in it the typical interpretation, which regards words more than things, and respecting which, therefore, we shall afterwards treat.

Obs. 4. With the allegorical mode of exposition, or the investigation of the double sense which the words may equally convey, is connected very peculiarly, the highly important question regarding the double sense o some prophecies; the one sense being that which respects the immediate event; the other that which has respect to a more remote subject, either the Messial, or the nature and fate of that religion which he was to establish. As to this question, which will be more properly discussed in another place, it will be sufficient at present, to make our remarks of a general nature; and in particular, we wish it to be observed, that this double sense is to be carefully distinguished from a degree of ambiguity of meaning, which the writers themselves sometimes affect, and of which we shall afterwards speak at another opportunity.

Obs. 5. We are of opinion, that the double gram-

matical and mystical sense of words ought by no means to be admitted of. For in no place are those, for whose use the books of the Old Testament were immediately written, clearly premonished of this, nor is any indication given by any of their writers that such a mode of interpretation should be admitted. Should the authority of the Apostle Paul be objected to us, it is to be observed that he is a more recent writer, who, as we shall afterwards see, only accommodated himself to the custom of his age. And, indeed, it appears from history, that the discovery of a double sense was merely a human invention, which passed from the Greeks to the Jews, and from them to the Christians. It is, too, a mode of interpretation altogether imaginary and arbitrary, and cannot be limited by any certain laws. Grammatical interpretation is subjected to certain rules derived from the nature of things, which prudence will dispose us to follow: but the allegorical interpretation is wholly dependent on the caprice of interpreters; and no precepts can ever be devised, by which the freaks of a luxuriant imagination can be restrained in hunting for, and carrying allegories beyond all bounds.

Obs. 6. But although we strongly condemn this double sense, we do not deny that there is a kind of allegory, which may be very properly employed. For one may indeed accommodate figuratively what has been said elsewhere in a proper and simple sense to his own purpose, in such a manner as not only not to incur reprehension, but even, if respect be had to the effect of a wise application, so as to deserve praise. And this we consider to be the case with those instances

where the Apostle Paul has really applied the allegorical mode. For the other instances which wear in his writings the appearance of allegorical interpretation, really belong to the typical mode of which we shall soon speak. Other cases ought not to be referred to either of these sorts, such as 1 Cor. ix. 9., and 1 Tim. v. 18., with which compare Deut. xxv. 4., where is contained only an argument, which rises from the less to the greater; so likewise Rom. x. 18, with which compare Psal. xix. 5, where the Apostle uses and applies to his own purpose the words of David, but does not say, that they were employed by the author, or inspired by God in that remote sense. The same thing may also undoubtedly be said of some other passages, and of Rom. x. 6-8., with which compare Deut. xxx. 12-24., where the Apostle, agreeably to the manner of his age, expresses what he wished to say in words taken from the Old Testament; and though used there in a very different meaning, yet notwithstanding, 'are most excellently adapted to his purpose. But, in a particular manner is the passage in Gal. iv. 22-26., to be referred to the subject we are treating of; where, however, the Apostle does not say that the figurative sense which he brings forward, was the sense intended in the historical narrative in the book of Genesis, to be conveyed along with the simple sense of the words; but as those, to whom he was writing, delighted in allegorical expositions, he, with singular prudence, accommodating himself to the understanding of the Jews, at the same time attacked them with their own weapons, which he pretty clearly indicates in verse

24th, where he says, ἀτινα εστιν αλληγοςουμενα, i. e. these things, even according to your own opinion, admit an allegorical and figurative interpretation.

Obs. 7. The typical interpretation, which may be referred to the allegorical method, and has with it some degree of affinity, we at the same time do not oppose nor reject. But, as it seems to us, the one ought to be distinguished from the other. For the typical sense, if we are right, exists in things, while the allegorical is derived from words. When we explain a passage typically, we only subjoin one sense to the words, which is not the case in those passages which are understood allegorically. For a type is nothing else but a certain similitude between two persons or things, of which the one contains a shadowing forth of the other. That in many of the rites prescribed by the laws of Moses, there were types of this sort, can scarcely be denied. The genius of the ancient Hebrews being such, as to be powerfully, nay, almost solely moved by objects presented to their senses, in accommodation to this constitution of mind among them, things removed from the senses were represented to them by the similitude of other things affecting their senses. Frequently, therefore, in the Old Testament, symbolical actions and ceremonies are made mention of, which were types or images of certain things. Thus, in particular, the rites of purification were of this nature, whose symbolical object was to place before their eyes the pollution of sin, from which they ought to be cleansed. The whole nature of expiatory sacrifices also, and of most of those things which were to be performed by the High Priest on

the solemn day of expiation, was so constituted, that in them we may see a shadowed forth representation of those things which were brought into the fullest light by Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the human race. See Col. ii. 17. That this typical nature of certain rites did not altogether escape the notice of the more intelligent Israelites at least, may be gathered from their custom of symbolical actions derived from their forefathers, and also from Psalms xxxviii. 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12., and li. 4, 9., where David describes the greatness of the sin he had committed by images taken from the disease of leprosy and its purification. There is, besides, no slight, nor altogether far-fetched similitude between certain historical events of the Old and New Testament, which occasionally may be usefully attended to and pointed out: and, therefore, we shall afterwards see that David, from the contemplation of his own circumstances, was more than once brought to the contemplation in some degree of similar circumstances in the life of the Messiah. How poetically, for instance, has he described, in Psalm lxviii. 19., the triumphal procession of the sacred ark, which was the symbol of the immediate presence of God, when borne up to Mount Sion: an event which suggested to the mind of the Apostle, through a certain natural similitude between them, the Messiah ascending in a triumphant manner to heaven, Ephes, iv. 8-10., and in the same way as David himself likewise, as we think, celebrated this event in Psalm ex. Such, in almost all cases, is the nature of those other passages, where those things which are typically explained in the New Testament

do not establish a double sense latent in those passages of the Old Testament which are quoted, but their mutual connection is caused merely by some degree of similitude between them.

It is scarcely necessary, in our times, to observe that this typical relationship ought not everywhere too sedulously to be sought for and pressed, as was the manner of many of the ancient Theologians. It may suffice to say, in general, that an interpreter ought to beware, when types may appear to present themselves, of indulging his imagination too far; and should endeavour, for the most part, to content himself with tracing out a general similitude, and remember that the more natural, simple, and agreeable to the nature of things the similitude he represents, the more should the plan he has proposed to himself to pursue be approved.

Obs. 8. We come, then, to the conclusion, that the literal sense of the words, as it is called, is that only true sense which should be sought for by an interpreter of the Old Testament. For it is quite evident, that this is the sense which is to be held as that, which the writer himself intended by his words, whether he used them in their proper or metaphorical sense. There are indeed in the Old Testament, particularly in the poetical books, many things set forth under figures and images, and some even in an allegorical form. But, even the simple grammatical interpretation of these passages requires that they be not expounded by the words taken in their proper sense, but that a due regard be had to the figurative language

#### § 3.

There is also a species of allegorical interpretation which is denominated *moral*; but, in the sense in which that term is understood, undeserving of our approbation.

Obs. 1. As in the books, particularly of the Old Testament, many things occurred, which, in the opinion of the most celebrated philosopher of our age, Kant of Koinigsberg, could not be reconciled to the purest precepts of religion and ethics, were they to be understood in their natural sense, he determined to explain such things in a manner accommodated to true religion, virtue, and morals, which therefore might be denominated moral interpretation. This sense of the sacred writers, therefore, however forced it might often be, he was of opinion ought to be adopted, just in the same way as the moral philosophers among the Greeks and Romans expounded their fabulous doctrines regarding the gods in a symbolical and mystical manner, that they might bring it nearer to sound philosophy.

Obs. 2. All that Kant and his followers have said to recommend this mode of interpretation, is certainly not sufficient to persuade us to adopt it. It has, indeed, some specious points, and seems to present some advantages to a philosopher: by its aid even some things difficult to be understood, foreign to our modes of thinking, and which seem not reconcileable to pure

doctrine, a theologian possessed of a felicitous genius might easily explain and adapt to the common use of mankind. Notwithstanding of this, if we wish to speak with accuracy, it does not deserve to bear the name of interpretation. For the interpretation of scripture, according to the Kantian mode, is really nothing else but expressing one's own thoughts in words taken from the sacred books, and understanding them for the most part in a far different sense from what was intended by the anthors, and obtruding as it were this sense upon these authors; thus making them, against their will, say what may be accommodated to a moral use, and vulgar understandings.

Obs. 3. But, should one meet with things in the Old Testament which he cannot approve, he certainly will not advance the honour of the sacred writers by perverting the natural sense of the words, and thus eliciting from them, what modern philosophy may approve. It rather becomes him to preserve that veneration due to these writings, by ascribing what may be matter of offence in them, partly to the nature of the very ancient Mosaic institution of religion, wholly constituted in adaptation to the genius, and for the use of the Israelitish nation, partly to the imperfect notions of God and virtue, which times so ancient could receive, and partly, in fine, to a manner of thinking and speaking, and to customs, adopted in such remote antiquity, and under a climate altogether different from ours. But should any one wish to apply to the common use of mankind even those things which to us seem least approvable; more than sufficient will be supplied to him which may serve both for wise.

ly regulating our conduct, and teaching us to avoid what is blame worthy, and also for enabling us rightly to estimate that divine goodness through which we have obtained a knowledge of the purer and more perfect doctrine of Christ.

# § 4.

Nor is their method to be approved, who, in the employment of the sacred writings, seem to have a greater regard to their own theological opinions than to the true meaning of the writers; which manner of interpretation, we may call the *theological* mode; although, at the same time, we are quite of opinion that the scheme of that religion, delivered in the sacred volume, ought ever to be kept in view by a prudent interpreter.

Obs. 1. The custom of most of the ancient Christian interpreters, which has indeed been less followed by the moderns, although not altogether abandoned, was to be guided by the tenets and dogmas of their own sect in the interpretation of the books of the Old Testament, when they made use of them as theologians. Consequently they eagerly laid hold of every thing which they could collect for the confirmation of their theological system in the writers of the Old Testament, and, provided they could explain them agreeably to what they called the analogy of faith,

they were persuaded that they had attained their true meaning.

- Obs. 2. Respecting this mode of interpretation, it will be sufficient to notice only some of the principal points.
- 1. The true sense of the sacred writers should not be derived from theological compends, or inferred from them, but should be searched out from the writers themselves: and where there is any discussion about the sense of a passage, the tenets of any sect of divines ought to have no more weight than the decrees of councils. The abuse in theology of twisting and accommodating the sense of scripture, to opinions delivered in the schools on one side or another, was certainly very common; but it was equally opposite to the true method of interpretation with the allegorical and moral, both of which attribute a sense to the sacred writers altogether arbitrary, and quite foreign to their meaning and intention.
- 2. The analogy of faith, as it may be called, or the digest of the principal heads of the doctrines of divine revelation cohering apply together—even this analogy of faith ought not to be sought for in theological compends, which are the works of man, and not by any means agreeing together, nay, very often differing and violently opposed to each other: but the doctrine of God should be drawn from the fountain in which it is contained, and after that we should investigate how each of its parts, as delivered at various times and by different writers, cohere together. For as we believe that the doctrines contained in the Old and New Testaments proceeded from one and

the same God, it is natural to expect that there should not only be no opposition, but the greatest harmony between them. Therefore, as it is proper in interpreting every human author, to compare such different passages as may illustrate each other, so are we particularly called upon to act thus in interpreting the divine writers, and in bringing them to a just agreement where it is necessary. But the searching for each of the points of doctrine, in both the Old and New Testament, as partly revealed for the first time by Christ and his Apostles, partly placed by them in a much clearer light, and giving equal faith to those who lived in the times of the old and new religion in a digested compend, is not the business of the interpreter but of the theologian, anxious solely about the building of his system and adorning and amplifying it by every means in his power. But, however, as there is a great difference between the old and new religion, and divine wisdom proceeded gradually in unfolding the truths of religion, always accommodating itself to the understandings of mankind and the circumstances of the times, it is the duty of the Christian interpreter to be solicitous and careful not to obtrude upon ancient times, and to ascribe to what may be called the precursory doctrine, that which only can belong to more recent times and a more perfect doctrine.

3. Although the analogy of faith, rightly understood and confined within its just limits, may be most useful to an interpreter of the Old Testament, its use, however, derives its value more from the nature of the thing than from any direct or clear authority of

Scripture. There is, indeed, only one passage which has given ground for the expression, in which, indeed, those who are addicted to the dogmatical interpretation of the Old Testament persuade themselves that they have discovered a high authority for defending their views. The Apostle Paul, treating in Rom. xii. 6., of the different faculties, powers, and offices assigned to the teachers of the primitive Christian church, and of the manner in which they were to be exercised, particularly mentions πεοφητειαν prophecy, which was to be exercised κατα την αναλογιαν της πιστεως, (according to the analogy of faith as it is in the English translation:) in which passage προφητεία may mean the interpretation of the sacred code, or the Old Testament, and αναλογια της πιστεως, the doctrine delivered by Christ consisting of various heads connected together in the closest manner; in conformity with which, therefore, the Old Testament ought to be interpreted. But αναλογια, in this sense, is not to be found in any example exactly similar: it signifies the proportion observable between various dissimilar things, and of which we take account. Πεοφητεια again here, and in other places, signifies the gift, or faculty of discussing divine subjects, in the sacred assemblies of Christians, and of instructing others regarding them; and of explaining the sacred books of the Jews, in a manner suitable to the interests of piety and virtue. Lastly, mioris, as it seems to us, in this passage, means the knowledge of the Christian religion, (compare 1 Thes. iii. 10,) which some possessed in a more full and perfect degree than others. To the αναλογια, or varying proportion of this knowledge, according to the prudent counsel of the Apostle, the πζοφητεία, or public divine instruction in the sacred assemblies, was, by each particular person to be accommodated. See on this subject 1 Corinth. iii. 1, 2. Heb. v. 12.

- Obs. 3. Let us now briefly illustrate what we have said of interpreting the Old Testament, according to the true analogy of faith, or agreeably with the doctrine of religion: and at the same time adduce some examples on this point, by which, what we mean may be clearly understood.
- 1. We strongly then condemn that mode of interpretation, by which, formerly many expressions of the Old Testament were brought together to prove the doctrine of the Trinity, which, when the words were taken by themselves, and apart from their connection, had somewhat of speciousness; but afforded no sort of proof when considered in connection with the context. Of this kind, is Psalm xxxiii. 6., where, as Jehovah, his word and spirit are mentioned, most interpreters doubted not that the Trinity was there clearly described: whilst, however, from the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, the word of Jehovah and the spirit, or rather the breath which is in his mouth, are quite synonymous, and the latter expression is merely a poetic periphrasis for the former.
- 2. But yet, a candid theologian and interpreter of the Old Testament, will acknowledge that there are passages in the Old Testament, which will not be explained according to the rules of sound interpretation, unless we call to our asistance the distinction, taught in many passages of the New Testament, as

belonging peculiarly to the Deity. The author of the xlv Psalm, ascribes in the 7th verse, divine majesty to a most illustrious king, whom we call the Messiah, and addresses him by the appellation of God: and it appears from the context that this name must be received in all its plentitude, because, under the same appellation of God, the prophet addresses the Messiah in the following verse, and which is no wise different from that which is applied to God in the same place. Unity of interpretation therefore compels us to understand both in the same sense. Of the same nature nearly are the passages in Isaiah ix. 5, (6 of the Eng. trans.) and Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6.

3. In passages of this sort, what then must the interpreter do? Must be expound the words in a simple and natural sense, in spite of the context, in order to avoid the accusation of what we have called theological interpretation? Certainly not—for when be perceives that by a right and sound interpretation of such passages, a superior and divine nature is attributed to the Messiah, who was to come in future ages, he does not proceed as a theologian, but as a good interpreter when he expounds them in this sense: and it is not only allowed to him, but it is quite proper, that by the help of the clearer light in which this superior nature of Christ has been placed in the New Testament, he should illustrate and confirm these passages of the Old Testament.

#### § 5.

Finally, we ought carefully to guard against coinciding with a multitude of late interpreters, who, while they will not admit any thing in the facts and doctrines of the Old Testament, unless what is quite consentaneous with that order of things to which they have been accustomed, and of which they can easily form a conception, interpret the sacred books agreeably to this opinion of theirs: which mode of interpretation we may with much propriety call *ultra-philosophical*.

Obs. 1. We have already shown, P. i. S. iii. c. i. § 2. that the study of philosophy, which teaches to judge and reason correctly, when properly conducted, is of great advantage in the interpretation of the Old Testament. We therefore do not condemn the application of philosophy to interpretation, but, on the contrary, highly approve of it when understood in a right sense; and much wish that an interpreter attend not to the words alone, but also to the meaning, purpose, and ideas of the author; and, when opportunity occurs, to the causes, both of the facts which the author relates, and of certain modes of speaking which he employs.

Obs. 2. In former times, a great controversy

existed in our country of Holland, whether philosophy should be applied as an interpreter of scripture or not. A book was published at Eleutheropolis or Amsterdam, in the seventeenth century, with this title, *Philosophia scripturæ interpres*, exercitatio paradoxa, in which philosophy is treated of as far as employed about reason, which Socinus and his followers held ont as the judge of Scripture, so that nothing should be admitted in the doctrine divinely revealed which a man could not comprehend: and, consequently, were of opinion that all the parts of that doctrine should be accommodated to the standard of human reason.

- Obs. 3. Of late, the rashness of a number of interpreters has proceeded much farther: who, abusing the light of philosophy, have strenuously contended, that whatever the Scripture contains, usually ascribed to divine appointment, and even the extraordinary events themselves, ought to be explained conformably to the understanding and opinions of men, and to the ordinary and usual course of human transactions. Regarding this mode of interpretation, as far as concerns the Old Testament, we have treated, P. i. S. ii. c. ii. § 2, 3,,—which, if we denominate ultra philosophical, we consider that we give it its true name.
- Obs. 4. Thinking that we have said enough, in opposition to this method of interpretation already, in the place just quoted, and in P. i. S. i. c. vi., it may suffice here to make one or two remarks.
- 1. This philosophical interpretation is equally founded in preconceived opinions, as the theological

a In the original, " in quo libro agitur de philosophia, quatenus de ratione usurpabatur."

mode which we attacked in the former §. For, as theologians, who follow this method, search for in the Old Testament, and even by their interpretation foist into it, whatever seems to be consonant with their theological system; in exactly the same way the philosophical interpreters go to the books of the Old Testament, with no other view but to discover in them what they can bring into conformity with their own opinions. Both these parties, therefore, introduce an equally arbitrary mode of interpretation, which does not bring out and set before us what really is to be found in the Old Testament, but what they wish should be there.

2. Neither is it true what these interpreters presume to be the case, that they thus promote the credit and honour of the sacred books; for, in reality, they detract greatly from their dignity. They are indeed continually repeating that this method appears to them every way worthy of adoption, because, by its means, a very great number of difficulties which have been objected to the books of the Old Testament, are happily removed, and nothing is left which can prove an offence to any one. We certainly confess, that, in this way, they give the highest gratification to the adversaries of our religion. But, to gratify them by taking away all divine intervention, what else is this, I beseech you, than to yield up the victory to them, and to betray the cause you have undertaken to defend? For you will better defend the honour, even of the ancient Scriptures, when you are not liable to the suspicion of conspiring with the open enemies of revealed religion. You will then prove yourself their

defender, when you come more and more to understand what is excellent and altogether divine in these books, and candidly and manfully explain it on every proper occasion to others. And, should many things occur to you as abstruse, and likely to give offence, remember always, that a vast number of things occur, even in the ordinary course of divine providence, which, although you cannot explain, it is yet your duty to believe that they are wisely constituted and arranged.

#### § 6.

We conclude, from what has been said, that the only method of interpretation, deserving commendation, is that which seeks for no other sense, than can with probability be shown to have been attached by the writers themselves to the words which they employed; and we consider it as an established maxim, that, in this respect, the same method must be pursued with the sacred, as with profane authors; and therefore we may conveniently refer, what we have to say on the interpretation of the Old Testament, to these two divisions—the explanation of words—and the explanation of the things signified by the words.

Obs. 1. As in each of those modes of interpretation which we have considered, it must be held that men

have attended more to their own opinions, than to the true mind of the writers; or, at least, that most of them have certainly been more biassed by the love of their own opinions than was proper, and did not labour solely to investigate rightly, and exhibit truly, what the writers wished to say; from the errors, therefore, into which they have fallen, it will be manifest to every reflecting person, what ought to be avoided, and what performed by a true interpreter of Scripture; and, consequently, that the right mode of interpretation which ought to be followed, and which is recommended by the very nature of the thing, is that, which, laying aside all preconceived opinions, seeks only to explain to others, what may properly be shewn to have been in the mind of the writers.

Obs. 2. It has been made a question whether, in interpreting the sacred writings, the same laws should be observed as are held good in the explanation of every other sort of compositions, or whether a different set of laws are required. On this point our opinion is, that the same rules should be universally observed, as being the only ones which shew the way by which we can arrive at the discovery of the true meaning of writers. Those who composed and wrote the sacred books were men. They used the language employed in their own times and among their countrymen, and by means of it they expressed that which was in their minds, and which they wished to communicate to others. Why then, in interpreting them, should other laws and rules be devised than are justly esteemed to be in force in every other case? We readily allow, that in the sacred writings

is contained a religion of divine origin, established by the extraordinary and very frequent interposition of God himself: which, too, we think ought to be carefully kept in mind by the interpreter. But this high and divine excellence of the subject matter, whatever may be the effect it ought to have on the interpretation, most certainly does not prove to us that we should ever depart from the common method of interpretation universally received, whose only object is to ascertain what writers meant to say when they used one set of words or another. This very excellence of the sacred books is to be established by reason and argument; but their meaning must be elicited from their words, as in every other writing. We certainly do not deny, that the sacred writers were guided and enlightened by God: but this inspiration, as it is called, incites us only to a fuller confidence in what they say, but not to assign to their sayings any other sense than what their words can bear. But in any other writings, when anything is attributed to God, whether expressions, or actions and events; just interpretation does not require that we should believe in this divine interposition as having really taken place, although the words seem to imply it. We must determine by other means whether interposition of that nature was believed by the writers themselves or not, and if believed, what is the ground of their belief: but, on the other hand, it would not be agreeable to reason from the fabulous or fictitious divine intervention, so frequently occurring in profane writers, at once to form the same judgment regarding that divine intervention which is spoken of by the sacred writers. Yet, however, while induced by the strongest arguments, we are of opinion that it was both intended, and on good grounds believed in every case by them, we at the same time think that it ought to be inquired into, whether they always, and on all occasions, had in their thoughts an extraordinary interposition, or were persuaded that it really took place: and, in order to determine this, their modes of thinking and acting must be taken into account, and the nature of the things treated of, together with the difference between the style of poetry and prose. We consider, therefore, the consistency of interpretation, of which we have spoken, as grossly perverted by those, who, because in not a few of the other writings of antiquity the Deity is brought in as ex machina, say that the same thing takes place in the sacred writings, and go so far in this way as even to compare, and put on a level the heathen poets with the sacred historians: and we are also convinced that this consistency of interpretation is neglected, and not attended to by those who interpret the sacred books according to the opinions and dogmas of theologians, in such a way as that their authors, were they to revive, would at once acknowledge that they were miserably misrepresented.

Obs. 3. Writers on sacred hermencutics have invented various distinctions, which we do not deny to be of some advantage; but we at the same time think that we ought to be much on our guard, lest, by making too many distinctions, and by multiplying terms, we should injure perspicuity, and fall back

into the scholastic mode. We at least, without employing these different distinctions and multiplied terms, and avoiding, as far as possible, technical phrases, shall follow the simple method of embracing, under two general heads, what we have still to say on the manner of interpreting the Old Testament; the first of which shall be regarding the understanding and explanation of words, and the second regarding the understanding and explanation of things.

#### PART SECOND.

#### SECTION SECOND.

OF THE UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLANATION OF WORDS.

# § 1.

For attaining a right understanding of every part of the Old Testament, when engaged in the study of it, above all things the most useful is knowing, or, at least, when requisite, investigating what the words, taken apart and by themselves, signify.

Obs. 1. In learning every living language, it is requisite, in the first place, to attend to the usage of those who speak it, which is observable in the writing, pronunciation, signification, and construction of the words: and this usage is acquired partly from the best writings, but principally from frequent and familiar intercourse with those to whom the language is vernacular, and by whom it has been cultivated, and is correctly spoken. But in different languages there is always a form of speech altogether founded upon the different genius, and internal and peculiar nature of each: although this form of speech, through

the greater cultivation and increasing extent of the language, and through the mutability of ages and human events, or other causes, partly depending on the caprice of men, partly on external occurrences, does not, while the language remains a living language, always preserve the same equable state, but becomes occasionally varied in many ways. In dead languages, again, the forms of speech must principally be derived from those writers to whom they were vernacular; and good interpreters and lexicographers, if such exist, are of great use in acquiring the knowledge of them: but what exactly their particular forms were in various ages, cannot be fully and perfectly determined, whatever helps we may have in our power; not to say any thing of the pronunciation, which no one can fully restore in languages that are dead. As, for example, it may happen, that a meaning of a Latin word or phrase, which may be perfectly consonant to the purest and most exquisite use of the language, may not be found in the writings of Cicero, or of the other authors of the Latin golden age; but which, even at that very time, may have been employed by the most correct speakers.

As to the writings of the Old Testament, which are not numerous, and which are the sole remains of the ancient Hebrew language; from these, its genius, and likewise its grammar and syntax generally, may be known and determined, many words and phrases may be collected which were in most frequent use while the language flourished, and the most common significations of each of these may be arranged in a

certain order, and some changes may also be remarked, which the language, notwithstanding the little tendency to change observable in the Hebrews, as weil as the other Oriental nations, underwent in the progress of time, and whilst it continued among them in all its vigour: but who will take upon himself to say, that he can set before us the usage of the Hcbrew language, as it existed at various times in all its living energy, or bring it out from its ruins in all its fulness? For there are forms, words, and phrases, which occur rarely, or but once only; there are, likewise, occasionally certain significations, both probable in themselves, and much adapted to the context, other instances of which are sought for in vain in the sacred volume; all which a no one can examine closely according to the usage of the language, and absolutely demonstrate their meaning. As then the path which leads to discovering the ancient power of the Hebrew language is very slippery, obscure, and difficult to investigate, we certainly would rather decline giving any directions for discovering its power and meaning. Yet we are of opinion that this subject, which is generally designated in hermeneutical treatises by the term usus loquendi, is worthy of investigation, and must not be altogether passed over by us. Our sole aim then, when treating of the usus loquendi, which obtains in the sacred volume, is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> In the original, "nemo proxime ad usum loquendi exegerit."—Tr.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup> In the original, "ad reperiendum priscum Hebræorum usum loquendi."—Tr.

to investigate by means of the best aids, the sense of its words and phrases, and, as far as possible, to define their signification conformably to the genius of the language which the writers employed. The particular usus loquendi which we assign to the different sacred writers, is the mode of expressing himself peculiar to each; which, as far as it is connected with defining correctly the sense of the words, will not require to be explained apart by itself, as it belongs almost wholly to that place where we shall treat of endcavouring to the utmost to fix the signification of words agreeably to the context, and the true meaning of the writers.

Obs. 2. The plainest way, then, which we can adopt in interpreting the very ancient writings of the first part of the sacred volume is, that we should know, or, as far as necessary, investigate what each of the words of an author individually signifies, and that we should then, from the context, as far as possible, ascertain which of the different significations, which the words admit, is most proper and most expressive of the sense of the writer.<sup>a</sup> That we should begin with words taken by themselves, is both necessary in itself, and a dictate of prudence, as it is indubitable that a signification has frequently been given to words from the context alone, which a more correct knowledge of the language has afterwards re-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> A sentence is here omitted which is introduced by the author, merely to guard against the ambiguity of *verbum* in Latin. It is as follows:—" Verba autem dicinus, et ea intelligimus, que speciatim ita vecari solent a Grammaticis, et ceteras orationis partes."—*Tr*.

pudiated as utterly false, or as not congruous. In no language, therefore, must this general rule be observed, more than in the Hebrew—that the signification of a word can scarcely be held to be clear in any passage, unless it can be properly shewn by some other means than from the context, that the meaning assigned belongs to it.

- Obs. 3. Having premised these things, let us now see in what manner the signification of individual words may be best discovered. To this disquisition we have already, as it were, paved the way in P. i. S. i. c. i. § 5., when we treated of the means by which we came to the knowledge of the Hebrew language.
- 1. As to many words, then, and particularly those which most frequently occur, it cannot be doubted that the signification attributed to them by the Jews is the true one which has been preserved by uncorrupted tradition. Without bringing forward examples from all the parts of speech, it will be sufficient to give instances in a few verbs. That the verb means to lie, מורח to die, קום to rise up, as the Jews say, innumerable places of the Old Testament, in which they are found, prevent us from doubting.
- 2. But there is very frequently occasion, in order to discover and properly determine the meaning of words, to seek assistance from other quarters than from the Rabbins. For neither have they delivered to us all the significations of all words, nor are we to admit those which they have delivered on their sole authority—nay, there are even not a few confidently determined by them, which ought undoubtedly to be rejected.—Again, there are words of frequent use

which cannot always conveniently be accepted in the same sense: and should a more rare sense belong to any word which may suit some passages, this suitableness merely does not afford a sufficient ground on which we can securely rely. The noun אַדקה for instance, does not everywhere conveniently receive the sense of justice, righteousness, but in some passages seems more fitly to convey the notion of benignity, benevolence: it follows not, however, immediately that, because this seems to be sometimes the more convenient signification, the noun was ever used in this sense, particularly when the two significations are so dissimilar.

Farther, the Jewish masters sometimes confidently ascribe to one and the same word, and its derivatives, significations so little congruous and connected with each other, that it may almost be doubted whether such significations be rightly assigned; and, undoubtedly, it is of importance to inquire, whether any light can be derived from other quarters, by which we may be induced unhesitatingly to admit them. The verb נכר affords a striking example: for in this word they say, that two significations, quite opposed to each other, are found—that of knowing, and of not knowing.—Lastly, there are not a few words, which occur rarely or only once; there are also derivatives whose primitives are lost: in determining the signification of both which classes, consequently, no cautious person will trust to the Rabbins alone, even although the context of the passages in which they occur may seem to be in their favour.

- 3. Although most words have many significations, some of them more, and some less, connected with each other, it is always of much importance to investigate what is the primary signification. Should one seek for this in any abstract or general notion remote from the senses, he would greatly impose upon himself, and would little attend to the great antiquity and simplicity of the language, which always requires that the primary signification of every word should be sought in what is immediately obvious to the senses, and often particularly in what expresses the imitation of some sound. See the remarks we have already made, pages 176, 177. When, however, this primary idea is once correctly ascertained, the secondary significations in which the word and its derivatives are employed, will be more easily explained and arranged in proper order: and by this means one will be able better to penetrate into the native genius of the language, and the meanings best adapted to each passage will be more certainly determined.
- 4. In this great penury of domestic resources, we must look around to see whether we can discover any other aids, fit for our purpose, through means of which the former may either be strengthened, or greatly added to. And such we shall find in the ancient translations of the Old Testament, but particularly in the other Oriental languages which are related to the Hebrew.—The ancient translations made from the Hebrew text have greater authority in proportion to their antiquity and accuracy. And they confirm the significations of most of the words that

are in general use assigned to them by the Jews, and that too in the significations which are more or less frequent. In the more unusual words relating principally to natural objects, they are of more authority than the traditions of the Rabbins: but in discovering primary significations they are of little use, although in other respects Aquila endeavoured to express the particular meaning of words, and his remains, consequently, are frequently useful in determining the meaning of words taken by themselves .-But, indeed, as the best ancient versions are not on all occasions guides sufficiently to be relied on, and often fail the interpreter, when he requires more aid, the safest of all resources is furnished by the cognate dialects; of whose employment and utility therefore it is worth while to speak somewhat more fully in this place.

Obs. 4. The utility of the eastern dialects, particularly of the Arabic, in determining the signification of individual words, is various and manifold.

1. They clearly confirm numerous generally received significations of verbs, nouns, and particles. Those words which we produced in the beginning of the former observation, are instances of this; and there are many others, besides multitudes of nouns, such as and, a father, then, a brother, then, a mother, then, a father-in-law, then, a day, most of the personal pronouns also, and not a few particles of every kind, are in the same circumstances; which being in use in the other dialects, we can be as well assured of their signification, as if the Hebrew were a living language at this day.

- 2. Sometimes the words of frequent use in these dialects present a sense which is more unusual, and much more congruous. The noun דו for instance, commonly signifies justice, righteousness, but שעט is used by the Arabians in the sense of truth, which signification is more adapted to Psalm lii. 5, where it is opposed to "שקר a lie."
- 3. Sometimes these dialects bring back, as it were, into use words which occur but very rarely, and of whose signification it was judged or conjectured merely from the context. Of this min, which occurs only in Isaiah xi. 8, is an example, which is very frequently used by the Arabians in and by the Syrians in lim in the meaning of directing, which applies well to the passage.
- 4. There are also words of dubious and uncertain signification, which are best fixed by the cognate dialects. We may take as an example the word مدر, whose true meaning is to boil, boil over, which survives in the Arabic word نغر, and is employed by the Hebrews in various ways, which have escaped the notice of even the most ancient interpreters.
- 5. There are, besides, not a few derivatives, whose primitives are not found in the very circumscribed compass of the Hebrew language, such as the well-known noun in the sacred volume אלוה, generally used for God. But the word אלוה, which occurs not in Hebrew, is much used by the Arabians in the sense of to fear, dread, so that the noun אלוג, אלוה will signify dreadful, deserving of the highest veneration.

- 6. Some Hebrew words, which are sought for in vain in most lexicons, may be felicitously restored by the aid of these dialects—such, for instance, as in Arabic , he wounded with a spear, and put to flight, Numb. xiv. 45; Deut. i. 44.
- 7. Lastly, The cognate dialects are highly useful in investigating and detecting the primary signification of words: but, above all the others, the Arabic is valuable in this way, both on account of its remarkable copiousness and antiquity, and because it has had excellent lexicographers, who have collected its varied riches. The utility of this primary signification, when discovered by a properly directed comparison of these dialects, is chiefly twofold: the one, that by this means the various, and sometimes opposite, significations of one and the same word, common to the Hebrews and other Oriental nations. may be reconciled; the other, that a satisfactory reason may be rendered for a peculiar Hebrew signification, better suited than the usual one to certain passages.—Of the first sort is the word , which, among the Hebrews, has the signification of inclination, propensity to, but among the Arabians (51) means to refuse, decline. Hence, among other words, is derived אביון, a father, ועם, poor, בען, reeds. The primitive meaning of the verb is to bend oneself, and to be bent like a reed: whence is derived the signification of assenting, and the opposite one of refusing; likewise the signification of a father, affectionately inclined towards his children, and of a supplicating poor man constantly bending himself downwards to obtain aid; and, finally, of a reed

easily bent, in which noun the clearest vestige remains of the primary signification, which we have assigned. Of the same sort is the word נכר, of which we have already spoken in a former observation, No. 2, which, referring to the primitive Arabic word is, signifying to prick, to mark by pricking, is used, in the opposite senses, of that, which one, by marking in some way, acknowledges and admits, or again, of that, which one does not acknowledge, and refuses .-Of the second kind, צדקה affords an example, which we adduced in the same place, as sometimes being best interpreted by benignity. The primitive word אדק, יצדק, is applied to what is straight, as a line. Hence, for the most part, it is used by the Hebrews, Aramæans, and Ethiopians, of the straight forward strictness of justice, but by the Arabians, of the straight forward love of truth. But as the signification of straight is also, especially by the Hebrews, transferred to that which is correct in morals, or to the love of virtue in general, hence, it is peculiarly applied to benevolence, the most esteemed virtue among the Orientals: and an indication of this application is even found in Arabic, where the noun generally signifies hindness shewn to the poor, or alms: and the same noun is found in almost the same sense in the Syriac dialect.

Obs. 5. In comparing these dialects, we ought to proceed cautiously, and not rashly: and there are certain rules which must be carefully observed, the principal of which we shall briefly notice.

1. The person skilled in Oriental literature, who desires to proceed rightly in illustrating any Hebrew

word, should, as much as possible, compare all the cognate dialects: for the more dialects in which the same word is found, the more light will be thrown on the Hebrew word. But very frequently what we seek will be found only in some of them, sometimes only in one of them. For the most part, however, the Arabic and Syriac dialects will not fail us, particularly the former, as being, of all the others, the most cultivated, the most copious, and also a living language at the present day.

2. In the comparison of each of these dialects, we must attend to the ready interchange and sometimes the transposition of certain letters. For not only are the letters called quiescent frequently interchanged, as for instance a word having & for one of its letters should be compared with a similar word having yor in place of x; in general, too, letters pronounced by the same organs, nay even y and y connected merely by their form and not by their pronunciation, are sometimes exchanged the one for the other. It is not even unexampled that one Hebrew word corresponds with two Arabic—such for instance as שמן, which has the significations both of fatness and the number eight, the former of which is in Arabic the latter (50.3. It is also worthy of remark, that words, which have the second and third radical similar, not unfrequently agree with those which have the middle or last quiescent, as in the Hebrew language itself, the words השוח, שוח, and השוח have in common the proper signification of sinking down. Lastly, certain letters are occasionally transposed: of which we have a clear example in and

- to cut. But we ought to be very cautious of calling in rashly this kind of comparison to our assistance, and only rely on it when the greatest similitude and consonance of signification appears.
- 3. In comparing the dialects, it is not sufficient to trust to dictionaries alone. For although in satisfying one's self as to the common use of any word, it is quite safe to trust to the Arabic dictionaries of Golius and Giggeius, and to those of Castello and Schaaf for the Syriac: this confidence must not be equally extended to all the significations given by them without discrimination, and particularly to the more rare meanings, as it is not always immediately apparent on what authority they are assigned. We are not, therefore, rashly to adopt any more unusual signification, even although given in the best dictionaries of the cognate dialects: but the more one has acquired for himself an acquaintance with the best writers to be found in the other dialects, the greater authority for the different and even rarer significations of the same word will he be able to produce, and even to discover some which are not given in the dictionaries.
- 4. No signification, particularly if rare, whatever proof we have for it, is, without great caution, to be obtruded on Hebrew words from another dialect. For as the same words, in the various dialects, have evidently undergone changes of signification, it might easily happen that a peculiar signification may have obtained in some one of these dialects which never had place in the Hebrew. From the great copiousness and antiquity of the Arabic language particu-

larly, it necessarily follows that not a few significations in process of time were attached to words, of which the ancient Hebrews never once seem to have thought.

5. In comparing the dialects with each other, we ought carefully to attend, as much as possible, to the primary signification of words. For by this means words, which at first glance may not seem to agree, will be brought to a coherence with each other: as for instance, באש, to stink, and נשש, to be bold, the primary signification of which is to be sharp, bitter: and one will thus be able to see what secondary significations most nearly approach to the primary, and what recede farther from it. The former however chiefly, if in any case they be suitable to the Hebrew writers, though rarely, may be safely admitted without any doubt; of which an example is given in the former observation, No. 2, in the noun צדק which is used for truth in Psalm lii. 5, plainly as the Arabic which properly expresses what is straight, right; see Obs. No. 7, of this §. So likewise the word דבר, which has usually the signification of speaking, sometimes more agrees with the signification of laying snares (insidias struendi) which is most closely connected with the primary signification of piling one thing above another (struendi); compare with it the Arabic word در.--We have an instance in Gen. xxxiv. 13.

§ 2.

In fixing the signification of single words we must attend to their grammatical nature.

Obs. 1. How necessary, in all cases, it is for the interpreter of the Old Testament to have studied the grammar of the Hebrew language, we have already shewn, P. i. S. i. c. i. § 6. We therefore only here speak of attending to the grammatical nature of single words, which, when well known, has generally some effect in determining the signification. For, as in other languages, so in the Hebrew, there is something in the varied form both of verbs and the other parts of speech, which either augments the signification, or in some way changes it.

Obs. 2. Though what we are here speaking of be not obscure, it may not, however, be useless to adduce some few examples. It is well known that among the Hebrews, who never used prepositions to form compound words, the verbs had different forms, or conjugations as they are sometimes called, whose particular signification, though not always to be insisted on, ought, however, always to be attended to: to this end comparison with the other dialects, but particularly the Arabic, is highly useful, because in it there is a remarkable variety of conjugations in the verbs extremely useful for knowing and explaining certain conjugations of the Hebrew verbs. Thus the more

rare conjugation פאעל more usual among the Arabs expresses what we call relative action, to which the conjugation התפאעל, ההתפאעל adds the reciprocal action: whence התפאקד for התפאקד signifies, he presented himself to be inspected by another. But as from different conjugations of the verb different forms of nouns proceeded, their force must be determined from that of the conjugation; צריק therefore, and אטח, if explained from the intensive force of the conjugation Pihhel, from which they are immediately derived, the former will mean exceedingly just and upright as man, and the latter a grievous sinner, or a most wicked man.—The word ארבה, generally signifying a locust, is of another nature: its primitive signification is highly multiplied, as it comes from רבה multiplied with & intensivum prefixed, which is exceedingly common in Arabic: so that locusts derive, as it were, their name from the incredible multitude in which they assail the East. We also add the word ending in heemantic, which occurs once in Lament. iv. 10, רחמניות, (the plural of ערחמני,) used of women, who by their very nature are mild and compassionate. Lastly, the noun האחרנים, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, which we consider to be a noun of exactly the same form, is not there derived from אחרון, last, but from אדרוני, to be reckoned among the last, which is found no where else, but is used here of the words of David, belonging from their subject to a period later than that of which the historian

was giving an account.

§ 3.

As it is according to the genius of the Oriental languages in general, and of the Hebrew language in particular, that most of their words, and even those which are in most frequent use, admit of more significations than one, an interpreter must carefully endeavour to ascertain which of the various significations ought to be preferred in each particular passage.

Obs. 1. Although we may hold it as indisputable, that the meaning of any Hebrew word is not to be determined from the context alone, yet, however, we do not deny that the context has very great weight in determining the signification, provided it agree to the words taken separately. For the significations of the same word are very often numerous: consequently one will not properly explain its meaning in any one passage, who does not rightly attend to the connection of the discourse in which it occurs. But if, in interpreting any Greek or Latin writer, great weight is to be laid on the context; how much greater must be allowed to it in an ancient Hebrew writer, who employs an oriental language in which there are many more differences of significations belonging to most words, than in Greek and Latin? How much then the context in the Hebrew language may at

times avail us in fixing the vague and uncertain signification of a very common word, it may be proper, although no one disputes the fact, to demonstrate by one example. The noun קול, of most extensive use, occurs in Genesis iii. 8, which by some is there understood to mean thunder, as that is sometimes called the voice of Jehovah; but is by most understood of the voice of Jehovah speaking, which our first parents heard about the evening, after they had violated the divine command. But there is nothing in the passage to lead us to think of thunder-indeed the signification of articulate voice appears much more congruous with the general strain of the sense. As God, however, is not said to have spoken to Adam, till after he had hid himself on hearing God, and as God is not described as speaking, but מתהלך, walking through the trees of the garden, we consider it to be more natural and consonant to understand it of the sound or noise of God approaching in the human form, as he was accustomed to do. In the same manner, therefore, Adam is to be understood in the 10th verse, I heard the sound of thee (not thy voice), or I heard thee in the garden approaching. That the word may be understood in this sense, which scarcely any one will deny, is however quite clear from 2 Sam. v. 24, where קול צערה means the sound of steps, or the noise which indicates some one approaching.

Obs. 2. Sometimes it is not so difficult for one who is attentive immediately to determine, which of the various significations is most to be preferred in a passage. Thus the verb אנכדי whose primary sig-

nification is to flow, when employed of the flow of speech, is not only applied to him who answers another, but also to him who begins to speak, as appears from Job. iii. 2, as well as from other passages. —The noun כהנים, whose primary signification is, persons approaching, is employed generally of the immediate ministers of God in sacred things, or priests; but as from its nature it may be applied to the immediate servants of a king, it is so used in 2 Sam. viii. 18, as appears from the context. Lastly, as the most usual name of God אלוה, properly signifies dreadful, next to be reverenced, it has many more general applications: and is applied to the magistrates of the people most deserving of honour, Exod. xxi. 6, xxii. 27; 1 Sam. ii. 25; it is also used in speaking of certain beings more excellent than man, Psalm viii. 6; likewise of a form particularly venerable, 1 Sam. xxviii. 13; and in Psalm xlv. 7, 8, the context almost requires that it be applied to the divine nature of the Messiah.—These examples then, and many others easily producible, clearly shew the use of the context in fixing the signification, of which the words admit.

Obs. 3. It, however, not rarely happens, that it does not so readily appear which of the various significations of any word should be preferred. And in this variety of significations, difficulties sometimes exist of that nature, which render it scarcely possible to lay down any certain rules by which they may be altogether overcome. Nevertheless, there are not a few means within our power, which, if rightly employed, will be found very useful to the interpreter:

the principal of which we shall briefly state, confirming them for the most part by examples, when it seems requisite.

1. Although by far the greater part of the words in the Old Testament are not generally employed in their primary but secondary significations, sometimes, however, the primary sense is employed, particularly by the poets, or is alluded to. To give one instance of the former kind well adapted to our purpose, we shall take the very common noun צדקה, which occurs in several significations—in Psalm v. 9, it may signify either the righteousness of God, or his benignity, or the virtuous conduct prescribed by him: each of which significations seems so agreeable to the context, that it may fairly be doubted which of them was in the mind of the poet. But when we call to mind that its proper signification is that of straightness, we immediately perceive that this meaning alone is applicable, and that we must translate the passage thus, Lead me into thy straight way, and thus it answers to what follows, Smooth thy path before me; and the straight way of God may be understood of his providence over men, through which all things succeed according to their wishes .- An example of the other kind may be found in Prov. xxviii. 1, where the word ממח occurs in its secondary and common signification of confidence; as this, however, seems not to come up to the point of the sentiment, we can scarcely doubt that the poet had regard to its primary signification of resting securely on the ground; and, assuming this signification, the whole force of the sentiment will be more clearly perceived.

- 2. In order that we may, among the different secondary significations, make a proper choice, we shall be often greatly aided by the parallelism of the sentences, which we shall shew in its proper place to be a peculiarity of Hebrew poetry. In Psalm xxiv. 5, for example, we may gather, that the noun דקדע, of which we have just spoken, ought to be understood in the meaning of benignity, from the former hemistich, where ברכה, blessing or favour, answers to it: while again, in Prov. xi. 5, the noun השיבו, moral depravity, opposed to it in the latter hemistich, leads us to translate it virtue.
- 3. If there be any ambiguity apparent in the use of a word, it is sometimes laid hold of by the author himself, so that he may in reality wish to conjoin the twofold signification of the word. This frequently happens in other languages, when riddles or witticisms, and pointed sayings are produced—but among the Orientals, who are highly enamoured of such plays of the fancy, is exceedingly common. Examples occasionally occur among the Hebrews, particularly in their proverbs: in these, therefore, we not only allow, but even consider it necessary to admit a double sense, but a very different double sense from that which we formerly considered inadmissible.
- 4. There are also some words, whose most usual signification is a general idea comprehending various particular ideas, often in the vague, and not sufficiently definite Hebrew manner of thinking and speaking. When such occur, it is highly useful carefully to attend to the most extended idea, and to explain it by the context by which it is particularly restricted. Of this

kind peculiarly is the noun הדכמה, which, in its general use, is applied to one who shews himself endowed with reason and understanding; but, in its peculiar application, is employed with regard to the divine government of human affairs, Job xi. 6, xii. 13, xv. 8; Prov. viii. 22—31; also of the perspicacity of the human intellect in investigating subjects, Job xii. 2; and of prudence and cunning, 2 Sam. xx. 22, compared with xiv. 2; and likewise of probity of manners, which is the best demonstration of human wisdom in common life, Deut. iv. 6; Prov. viii. 1—21. 32—36.

5. The comparison of parallel passages is sometimes of the greatest utility. When we assert this, we do not speak of those passages in which the same word occurs. From passages of this kind, indeed, compared with each other, the various significations of a word may be attained, and admirably confirmed: but its signification, in particular passages, can only be determined by consulting their contexts. But we now speak of passages in which the same thing is conveyed to us by a different word: here, however, we must carefully ascertain whether the same thing exactly be intended or not. Thus, what we have said in Obs. 1, of the noun כהנים, 2 Sam. viii. 18, not signifying priests, but the immediate servants of the king, as appearing from the context, is confirmed indubitably from the parallel passage, 1 Chron. xviii. 17, where those who are the same persons spoken of in the other passage, are called ראשנים ליד המלך, the chief servants of the king. So likewise those who, in Dan. ii. 27, are called גורין, cutters, are the same with

those whom Isaiah xlvii. 13, calls הוברי שמים, whose primary meaning is cutters of heaven, from הבר, in Arabic to cut, i. e. astrologers, who distributed, and, as it were, cut the starry heaven into different portions or constellations. Both these instances are almost trite: but we shall produce another, from which it has appeared to us of how great value the right consideration of parallel passages may be. The inhabitants of heaven, who are of a superior nature to man, are designated in the book of Job by various names, and among the rest by that of holy ones: which one can scarcely doubt, who compares the remarkably parallel passages in chap, iv. 18, and xv. 15. We, therefore, think that the same beings are spoken of, (chap. v. verse 1.): we are even persuaded that one of these heavenly inhabitants is mentioned under the name of a saint or holy one, in vi. 10, or the same heavenly spirit whom Eliphaz feigns to have appeared to himself, iv. 12, &c .- This example then shews how useful it sometimes is, that one should carefully attend to the style of writing peculiar to an author, or to what is generally called the peculiar usus loquendi.

6. This careful consideration of those things which are peculiar to a writer, affords likewise other valuable fruits to an interpreter: which we shall now endeavour to demonstrate from the same author of the book of Job, whom, indeed, we have observed to have occasionally something peculiar in his manner of writing, which being attended to, may conduce to the explanation of some passages. This writer, then, has more than once added the letter n at one time,

and suppressed it at another: this being observed, the word יאדל then, chap. xxv. 5, which, from the collation of some manuscripts, seems to be the true reading, will be for יהל from הלל, in the sense which is particularly adapted to the passage; he hath not even declared the moon splendent: but again, יוו in chap xxxi. 35, which has caused a great difficulty, we think has been written for יוארי, my desire.

7. Lastly, we recommend to the interpreter to pay every attention to the subject of the writing, and the age of the writer: because the more considerately he does this, the more frequently will he discover rightly the signification of the words, even in those instances where the signification is unusual. Two examples will shew what advantage may occasionally be derived from this. The first is from 1 Sam. xiii. 3, 7, where העברים, used by the Israelites themselves, is not the proper name of the Hebrews, such as it was among themselves in the former ages of their state, and as it was for a long time afterwards among the neighbouring nations, compare I Sam. iv. 6, 9, but what originally it was, an appellative, and so applied to the Israelites who dwelt beyond Jordan. The second example is from Job xl. 23, where the mention of Jordan, a Canaanitish river, in the description of the river horse of the Nile, and that, too, by a very ancient writer, who did not dwell in the Canaanitish country, is quite incongruous. But in this passage, ירדן written without m prefixed, is, as we doubt not, an appellative applied to a river flowing with a great stream of water, from to descend, and is the same with its

synonym נההר, in the former hemistich of the verse, or a great river, and is consequently the Nile itself.

## § 4.

That we may understand the meaning of whole phrases, regard must not only be had to the signification of the individual words, but, in a particular manner, to their construction, or syntax, as it is called.

Obs. 1. As in all languages, an interpreter ought carefully to attend to the structure of the words in the author whom he expounds, so in the Old Testament writers this is particularly requisite, in proportion as their manner of speaking, arising from their very distant age, from the difference of their climate, and from the genius of the nation, differs from what we observe in the modern and European languages, nay, in the ancient Greek and Roman languages, Should one then not be sufficiently versant in the syntax of the Hebrew language, however much he may be acquainted with the etymology and proper signification of the particular words, he must frequently fall into error in explaining whole phrases.

Obs. 2. For thus understanding the construction of Hebrew words, so as to derive therefrom great advantage in interpreting, the constant perusal of the books of the Old Testament is of the utmost use.

For although the number of these books is very much circumscribed, it is, however, sufficient for determining and satisfactorily fixing its whole syntactic nature; and, indeed, we have much fuller means afforded us for this purpose, than for investigating and developing the proper meaning and power of individual words. The books, indeed, are by different authors, and of different ages: but the manner of construction is observed to be almost always extremely similar, and in the great uniformity of the language it has undergone very little change through the process of time. The very great difference even between the simple prose style and the more sublime and poetic diction, which is in general more abrupt, elliptical, and difficult, causes no very remarkable diversity in the genius of the construction.

Obs. 3. The comparison of the cognate dialects, and particularly the Arabic, which is so useful in fixing the signification of individual words, is by no means useless for illustrating the structure of the Hebrew language: and the more any one is well acquainted with these dialects, the more will he understand the whole nature of the Hebrew manner of expression, the more easily will he explain it, and the better will he be enabled to enter into the more unusual Hebrew constructions, and to establish, illustrate, and place them beyond doubt.

Obs. 4. Out of many examples which we might produce, two may suffice for our purpose, in confirming what we have alluded to in the former observations. Instances have occurred, where persons not sufficiently skilled in an accurate knowledge of the

syntax have supposed an error to exist in passages where there was really no such thing, and have, in consequence, disputed the received reading without any just ground. Thus in Ps. ix. 7, the expression המה זכר זכרם המה, has vehemently offended many; but here the separate pronoun is joined to the affixed pronoun for the sake of increasing the force of the expression, so that it ought to be translated thus, The memory of them, even of these very men, has perished: and a similar construction is far from being unusual in Arabic.—There are some constructions in Hebrew not difficult indeed, but not sufficiently in general attended to, which, however, are worthy of notice. Of this sort is that, in which two synonymous verbs or nouns, or at least allied in their signification, are so joined without a conjunction, as that the connection may be of a closer kind-a construction very frequent among the Arabians. Thus Noah is called a man צדיק תמים just and perfect, Gen. vi. 9. The poet, in Psalm x. 3, speaks, as it seems to us, in the same manner regarding the wicked man, And rapacions of gain as he is, דרך נאץ ידורה he bids adieu to and despises Jehovah.

Obs. 5. We may here also take the opportunity of remarking the peculiar use and syntactical force of some formulæ peculiar to verbs, which can be determined only by the context. For as the forms of the tenses among the Hebrews are in their own nature indefinite, it can only be discovered by the context what relation they have to time: and here there is something which is occasionally not generally observed. For instance, the form of the verb which

has the name of the preterite among the grammarians, but is equally accords as that other form which is called the future, is to be understood, according to a well known rule of syntax, in the meaning of either the future or imperative, when it is joined with either a preceding future or imperative by the prefixed conjunction. But as it has been properly remarked, that the signification of the future tense must sometimes be given to it, even when the conjunction is not employed -why then should it not sometimes require the signification of the imperative when the conjunction is not present, although this has been less observed? We therefore have no doubt but that משפט צוית, Ps. vii. 7, should be translated, command judgment. It likewise seems to us that this idiom is found in some other passages; as in Ps. iv. 2; xxii. 22; lxxi. 3.

## § 5.

As in some other languages, so particularly in the Hebrew that very ancient Eastern language, the style is very often tropical and figurative: consequently, the nature and genius of this species of style must be carefully attended to by an interpreter of the Old Testament.

Obs. 1. When treating here of the tropical manner of speaking, we do not allude to that figurative signification of words which is more common than the

proper signification. For in the Hebrew language, numerous words from necessity are often used in a figurative sense, and some even have so deviated from the proper signification, that it seems almost to have fallen into desuetude: an example of which we have in the very common verb ידע, whose usual signification is to know, whilst its proper signification is to place, to lay up, hence to lay up in mind; compare the Arabic word . This species of trope is of much greater extent, and belongs rather to etymology, and to the understanding and explication of particular words, than to our present object, when we are considering the figurative and tropical style in general. This, then, of which we now treat, is not so much to be attributed to necessity, but rather must be derived, partly from the disposition of men little eultivated, being chiefly moved by objects affecting the senses, partly, however, also from the desire of delighting or persuading. For the imperfect, vague, and not accurately defined manner of speaking among mankind was such, that they often put the effect for the cause, or the cause for the effect, a part for the whole, or the whole for the part, and made many other such changes, which are generally classed under metonomy and synecdoche. For although the more cultivated nations did not altogether abstain from these, yet they are observed to have made much less frequent use of them than those who were less cultivated. But as the very nature of these figures is to present things to the senses, therefore men are more prone to employ them the more frequently in proportion as they happen to be more disposed to be affected by things presented to the senses: and they are used frequently by men in all ages and of every nation, especially, however, by poets, both for adding strength to their expressions, and also for affording delight. It will, therefore, not be improper to make a few brief remarks upon them.

Obs. 2. The Hebrews were fond of a style full of tropes and figures of various kinds; and their poets indulged greatly the luxuriancy of their imagination in the employment of them. But even in prose, the more simple style used in common life, tropes were much employed by them. And in treating here of these tropes and figures, we have to observe, that there is in them a certain degree of similitude between two things which may be placed in different lights, and consequently represented by different words. If the similitude be directly pointed out, it is called comparison; if there be no direct mark of the comparison, and if at the same time it be more brief, it is called a metaphor; if it be continued through a long and connected description, it is an allegory; if it represent a feigned story, it is a parable; if the action of the narration be transferred from man to the Deity, it is called anthropopathy; if any thing peculiar to men be attributed to the lower animals, or to inanimate things, or even to virtues and vices, as if those things, which are destitute of the properties of real persons, could really be endued with their nature, it is called prosopopeia, or, personification.

Obs. 3. No one need wonder that the most of these figures of speech are very common in all the Hebrew writers, when we recollect that the ancient Hebrews were strongly excited by sensible objects; that they

retained much of the primitive infantile simplicity of man, particularly in their original state down to the Babylonish captivity, and that they lived under an eastern climate, where the imagination is almost always lively and fervid. The more one attends to these circumstances, the more easily will be comprehend the cause why the Hebrew poets in particular shew greater boldness in the use of these figures than would be easily tolerated in the present day, and not unfrequently, by their figurative language, exaggerate things, and employ an hyperbolical manner of expressing themselves.

Obs. 4. The Hebrews took their tropes and images from those things principally, by which they were most accustomed to be affected. They had therefore different sources of these images, from which they supplied themselves at pleasure. Most frequently they derived them from natural objects: and there were no objects in heaven or in earth, nor in the various animals and different products and plants of the soil; nothing, in a word, which offered itself to their view, which they did not convert to their use, that they might the better express their thoughts to others and convey them to their feelings. There are no images which they more frequently employ than those which are taken from light and darkness, which their poets vary in infinite ways, and often shew in them great boldness, luxuriance, and licence of imagination; so that even Isaiah himself (xxx. 26,) that most cultivated poet, in describing the promised felicity, paints the moon shining like the sun in his meridian brightness, and the sun increased sevenfold in the splendour of his light .- Numerous images again are taken from common life, and particularly from agriculture and the attendance ou eattle; which, although in their own nature they are extremely simple, and may sometimes appear to us low, are, however, laboured by the best poets to admirable purpose, and in the most excellent manner. By an image of this kind Isaiah describes the external nations trodden down like corn in the threshing floor, and winnowed by the Israelites, (xli. 15, 16;) and Job compares the admirable care, with which he was formed by the supreme artificer of nature in the womb of his mother, with the care, with which milk is eoagulated for the formation of cheese, (x. 19.)—Their history, also, but particularly their religion, supplied some images to the Hebrews. Of the former kind is the description of a ruined country, by images taken from the destroyed Sodomitic region. Isaiah xxxiv. 8-10. Of the latter kind we shall bring one example, that of Psalms xxxviii. and li., quoted by us on a former occasion, p. 198, pertaining to the peculiar genius and object of the Israelitic sacred rites, where David has compared the turpitude of his heinons crime with the loathsome disease of leprosy, and the great care with which the leper was to be purified.-Finally, there are not wanting images taken from fictions, such as we designate by the name of fables, with which the poets were particularly delighted: but of these we shall speak more conveniently in another place.

Obs. 5. For understanding the nature, force, and variety, of tropical language, those books are not indeed useless, which treat purposely of the tropes and

figures particularly occurring in the sacred scriptures. But although one should be completely master of even the best of these books, and were able to enumerate in order, and to call all the various tropes by name; and thus, when any of these tropes was proposed to him, could immediately, like a most diligent scholar in a rhetorical school, by the aid of a faithful and prompt memory, define it, and assign to it its proper designation: still he ought not, however, in consequence, to be esteemed to be one who fully perceives the force and genius of tropical language, and the nature of every image; nor would such an one easily explain what is the power of each, and how it is adapted, and proper for the author's purpose. For, in the same manner as the structure of the Hebrew language is much better learned by use and exercise than from the rules of grammarians merely, so the diligent and assidnous reading of the Old Testament is far more useful in attaining an understanding of the tropical language of the Hebrews than the best precepts of the Rhetoricians. For this purpose, therefore, the reading of the Old Testament is highly to be recommended—because the more any one is versant in it, the more will be contract a familiarity with the tropical nature of the language which is found in it, and the more easily will he insinuate himself into its inmost recesses.—But farther, it is very useful, nay even necessary, to gain a knowledge of the things themselves, from which these images are principally derived. For without this, no one can tolerably explain what is their force and signification.-Besides, in order that one may form a correct and

true judgment concerning many of the Hebrew tropes, it is requisite to pay particular attention to the manners of the nation, and to their ways of thinking and acting so very unlike to ours: because if this is not done, not a few images which occur in their very best poets will appear to him less apt, or not sufficiently forcible, nay, sometimes not becoming or decorous.-Lastly, as the writers in the cognate dialects afford much aid to the better understanding of the structure of the Hebrew language, so likewise the other writers, in a similar style in that language, but especially the Arabic authors, such as have particularly distinguished themselves in the more sublime and poetic style, are of no small advantage in leading to the understanding and explication of the tropical diction of the Hebrews. For although very many of these are by far more daring and less pure than the Hebrews in the use of images and figures, and do not altogether derive them from the same sources as they do: the similarity, however, of the tropical diction in both is as great, as we might expect in nations living under the same climate, and the colour of whose minds, so to speak, was so much alike, although not agreeing otherwise in their institutions and fortunes, in which, indeed, in many instances, they were exceedingly unlike.

Obs. 6. In distinguishing tropical language, and in discriminating it from that which we must understand in the proper sense, he will succeed best who rightly attends both to the scope of the passage, to the age of the writer, and to the nature of the things treated of, and who is actuated by no other wish

than that of arriving at the meaning of the author .-If the subject be historical, and not treated in a poetical but historical manner, things are, for the most part, described in the most simple language, and there are no other figures employed except those which are frequently used in common life, and therefore quite easily understood. But that things of this nature are often amplified and adorned by various figures and images by poets, we need scarcely remark: and, indeed, what the difference is, even in the same writer, and in the same subject, between history and poetry, very clearly appears in the historical account of the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites, and of the overwhelming of the Egyptian army, given in Exod. xiv. and the poetical account Exod. xv. But it deserves to be remarked, however, that not only do the speeches written in prose in the historical books abound in more images and tropes for the sake of adding greater force to the argument, and for expressing more strongly the feelings of those speaking, but likewise that certain particular things, intended to affect the mind more strongly, are clothed in a loftier and more figurative style: of which particular instances are found in the giving of the law at Sinai, Exod. xix. 18, 19, in the celebrated battle of Joshua successfully prolonged in consequence of his prayers, Josh. x. 11-14, and in the miracle of the prophet Elijah carried away to heaven, 2 Kings ii. 11, 12.-Nay even, in the most ancient of all historical writings, which are contained in the first part of the book of Genesis, more things are related in a figurative manner, than are found in those parts of less

antiquity: and the cause of this must be sought for in the genius of this very remote antiquity, because such was the manner of speaking among the first of mankind, living as it were in a state of childhood, as being particularly delighted with figures and images: and therefore it is not without reason that we have said that careful attention ought to be paid to the age of a writer.—Farther, there is no one who will not readily acknowledge, that the nature of the things treated of, must be particularly regarded. And here, innumerable examples immediately occur, in which the sacred writers themselves speak of God either after the manner of man, or exhibit him so speaking; and that such should frequently be the case in both the historical and poetical writings of every age, the very nature of the Supreme Deity, which is not comprehensible by man, and requires to be brought down in some manuer to the human understanding, renders absolutely necessary. That more frequent, and also more remarkable examples occur in the most ancient writings, must be attributed partly to a nearer intercourse of God with men, to whom he occasionally appeared in a human form, but must principally be accounted for from the eirenmstances of that remote antiquity to which we have already alluded .-Besides, the context which is most usefully applied to defining the sense of particular words, is likewise of the greatest advantage in enabling us to distinguish tropical language; and from it a sagacious and well instructed interpreter, for the most part, will be able fully to collect and to explain the author's meaning. It will suffice to adduce one example of this. That wisdom which is introduced, speaking in Proverbs viii. 22-31, is nothing else but the virtue which is generally called by this name in the book of Proverbs. It is there, by a poetic and oriental image, introduced as a person who is the inseparable companion of God, and who offers himself to men as an affectionate counsellor, verses 32-36; ix. 1-11, with which compare iii. 13-20; iv. 5-9. We have selected this example, because not a few of the ancient theologians, from not attending at all to the context, were of opinion that not a fictitious but a real person was described as the continual companion of God; namely, that person who, in the beginning of the Gospel of John, is called the loyoc. This absurd interpretation, adopted among Christians from the desire of defending by every means theological opinions, was also current among the Jews, from the Pharisaic superstition urging too far the proper signification of the words; and from the same cause they have adopted the opinion, that in Exod. xiii. 8-10, 16; Deut. vi. 4-9; xi. 18-20, they are ordered to write some portions of the divine law on slips of parchment, and to bind them on their forehead and arms, and to tie them to the door-posts of their houses, when, in fact, if they had been actuated only by the desire of understanding and explaining the precept according to the mind of the legislator, they would have easily perceived that the highest and most assiduous attention to the divine laws was described in that figurative language which presents, as it were, objects to the senses.

Obs. 7. Lastly, we may make a remark or two on

the manner in which tropical language should be interpreted. And here we shall observe generally, in order not to interfere with what must afterwards be attended to when we treat of the interpretation of the poets, who are wont to be much delighted with this kind of writing, that we ought only to seek for that in images and figures, which the author intended to signify by them, and ought not to assign to them any other meaning than what can be fairly shewn to have been in his mind: in which one will more readily succeed, the better he has been prepared by the auxiliary studies, and the more he has endeavoured to transfer himself into the situation of the writer. This rule, indeed, holds in the interpretation of all kinds of writings, but especially in the case of the Hebrew writers, who indulge even to luxuriance in the use of images, figures, and comparisons, and often carry them to the highest pitch, a so that he who may wish to apply and accommodate each of their parts to the subject in hand, will generally depart widely from the true meaning of the author. But we are particularly anxious that this rule be scrupulously attended to in the explication of the allegories and parables which occur in the Old Testament; of which the nature is not much dissimilar, unless that in the latter more than in the former the subject matter has more of action in it, and that too occasionally less removed from historical truth. Such in particular is that most admirable parable, by which Nathan the prophet endeavoured to bring David to a sense of

a In the original, "easque sæpe mirifice exornant."

the crime which he had committed, 2 Sam. xii. 1-6. This parable, setting forth a fictitious case framed so simi'ar to a real one, that the king could not doubt that a true cause was brought before him for judgment, must be interpreted agreeably to the sole object of the author, which was to endeavour to show clearly to David, not aware of his purpose, the atrocity of his crime; and not by cutting it down as it were into minute portions and particles, and comparing each of these portions with those of the real facts. And should one imagine that this, which is proper to be avoided in explaining the meaning of parables, is allowed to him in interpreting allegories, he may indeed shew a sort of ingenuity, but will not deserve the praise of being accounted a just and correct interpreter. The longest and most elaborate of all the allegories of the Old Testament, which represents the Jewish people under the image of an adulterous woman (Ezek. xvi.), affords, indeed, ample materials to an interpreter who indulges in the specious fancies of imagination; but it has no other meaning according to the real intention of the author, however much he varies and dwells upon this image, except that the Jewish people, who had shamefully perverted the divine blessing of that pure religion by which alone they were distinguished, had incurred the penalty of the severest punishment.

## § 6.

The language of the Hebrew books, particularly where it is figurative, has very frequently a certain peculiar force, which must not be neglected by an interpreter. But, at the same time, it ought to be carefully guarded against, that we do not suppose more or greater emphasis, as they are called, in words or phrases, than were intended by the writers themselves.

Obs. 1. As the Orientals generally, more strongly affected by their sensations, and naturally endowed with more vehement feelings, are accustomed to express these feelings and affections of their minds by certain external signs, and particularly by their language, so no one can doubt but that the Hebrews possessed this in common with them. There is, indeed, an admirable force of diction in most of their poems: and this must not only be ascribed to the subjects on which they are employed, but also to the style itself, to the tropes and figures also, and to the structure of their language itself, which is excellently adapted to express, and, as it were to paint the feelings of the mind. Nay, even when writing prose, if their minds are affected more strongly than usual, this appears either in the structure of the words, or by the addition of the paragogic letters, as they are called, or by the accent differently placed, and consequently by certain changes induced on the words themselves. An interpreter, therefore, ought not to neglect these, or other things of a similar nature, lest he should diminish the natural force of the words.

Obs. 2. But should any one wish to refer to the head of emphasis, such circumstances as we have just alluded to, he may certainly do so if he understands by the term emphasis, as is frequently done, what we generally denominate strength or weight of expression. Emphasis, however, strictly so ealled, is understood to exist, when to any word or expression, beside the signification which it generally has, is conjoined some other idea, which adds to it a peculiar force. Thus the verb דיה, to live, is frequently used to express a happy life; and the verb אדע, to know, is applied either to that knowledge which implies in it a benignant care, or to that knowledge with which is conjoined a most immediate sense of merited punishment, or lastly, to that knowledge which expresses at the same time decorously, the conjugal conjunction .- The context will readily point out to an attentive reader, not unacquainted with the Hebrew idiom, emphases of this sort.

Obs. 3. But the absurd and minute industry of many of the Rabbins on the one hand, and a certain excessive officiousness of not a few Christians, out of a mistaken zeal for piety,<sup>a</sup> on the other, have infinitely multiplied these and other kinds of emphases, and have often introduced them where the authors did

<sup>\*</sup> In the original, "nimia—Christianorum sedulitas, pietatis nomine non nisi inanem præ se ferens speciem commendationis."

not intend them; nay, they have even obtruded them in opposition to their intention. For they have not unfrequently imagined an incredible energy to exist in single words, in letters, and even in the points themselves. In former times, they were accustomed confidently to lay it down as a rule, that as even the words themselves had been inspired and suggested to the sacred writers by the Deity, therefore, as great emphasis should be assigned to each word as possible. But he who will observe a just medium in his veneration for the sacred volume, whilst he will not wish to detract any thing from the natural force of the words, neither will be be desirous of attributing any force to them, except what the sound rules of interpretation authorize and direct—and will, therefore, prescribe to himself this law: that he must not assign to words any other signification than what can properly be shewn to have been intended by the writers.

Obs. 4. We take this opportunity of admonishing the interpreter not to employ the highly useful study of etymology in such a manner, as through its means to endeavour to discover emphases in themselves very improbable. Although, at the present day, this abuse is almost obsolete, we have not deemed it improper briefly to advert to it. The investigation of the primary or proper notions implied in words for fixing the signification of individual words, taken by themselves, and apart from the connection in which they stand, is very valuable: and these primary ideas are sometimes employed, or had respect to: See p. 235. But as this is not always the case, and as the secondary significations are chiefly in use, these must, in the

great majority of eases, be attended to by the interpreter in the investigation of the meaning. From etymology, therefore, in some instances, the appropriate use of words may be demonstrated: but through its means to discover emphases, would be exactly the same thing as to endeavour to discover elegancies in the Latin writers in passages where nothing else is to be found but the appropriate and most common use of words.

## § 7.

For the right and proper understanding and exposition of the language of each writer of the Old Testament in all cases, the comparison of parallel passages, the investigation of the context and subject, and a just attention to the remoteness of the age, deserve to be recommended.

Obs. 1. When discussing above in § 3, Obs. 3, the manner of settling the meaning of words admitting of different significations, among the other aids for this purpose, we pointed out the comparing of parallel passages: but then we only treated of that sort of passages, in which one and the same thing is expressed, not by the same but different words. Here, however, where we have regard to whole phrases, and the whole style of the writer, we, in addition,

take into consideration those passages, in which the same or very similar expressions, though not altogether applied to the same things, must be understood in the same meaning, and consequently mutually illustrate each other. What, therefore, we said in § 5, Obs. 6, of interpreting the passages in Exod. xiii. 8-10, 16.; and Deut. vi. 4-9.; xi. 18-20.; not literally but figuratively, may be confirmed by comparison with Prov. vi. 20-22.; vii. 1-3., in which Solomon, recommending the precepts of wisdom or virtue to be tied to the neck, breast, and fingers, and to be inscribed on the tables of the heart, means the continual remembrance and care of them, just as Moses did by similar figurative expressions employed, as adapted to his purpose, in a different case. Nor is the poetic phraseology made use of by Isaiah xlix. 16., unlike, where God is represented as having delineated on the palms of his hands the image of Jerusalem: which certainly signifies nothing else but his constant and benignant divine care of that city, which was manifest, as it were, to the eyes of all. What advantage accrues from the comparison of passages, in which the same thing is described by similar expressions, will appear from one example alone. We have already shewn by the context only, that in Prov. viii. 22, &c. not any real person was indicated, but merely the wisdom of God clearly manifested in the creation, which was recommended to man as what he ought to shew forth by the pursuit of virtue. That this is the true interpretation, may be confirmed by instituting a comparison with Job xxviii. 20-28., where that wisdom, which God

manifested in the works of creation, and which man ought to shew forth by the love of goodness and rectitude, and by avoiding iniquity, is manifestly treated of .- Here, however, it will not be superfluous to inculcate the necessity of carefully ascertaining, whether by the apparent exact similitude of expressions the same or a different thing be intended. Thus, in Zephan. i. 9., leaping over the threshold, is thought to be illustrated by a similar expression in 1 Sam. v. 5., where those Philistines, who, from that time downwards, entered the temple of Dagon, are said not to have touched its threshold with their feet, because the head and hands of that God had lain there. But in the passage in Zephaniah there is no reference to any superstitious rite of that nature, but by a proverbial expression, the very prompt obsequiousness of servants shewn in executing the commands of their masters, however unjust or wicked, is described. This one example sufficiently shews, how much prudence is required to prevent one from thinking that, on account of some degree of similitude between certain phrases, passages are parallel which really are not so. But on this occasion, we, in one word, remark, that sometimes we may derive no less assistance from the poetical parallelism of thoughts for the right understanding of certain phrases, than for fixing the signification of words: but this will be more properly illustrated as far as necessary, when we come to treat of the interpretation of the poetical writers.

a In our translation, it is "leap on the threshold," which is a mistake. Vid. Winer's Lex. & Rosenmuller's Schol. Even the primary meaning of "צל" is above, not on or upon.—Tr.

Obs. 2. It may be useful, by one or two examples, to shew how valuable the context and attention to the scope of the writer is to the right interpretation of certain phrases.-Moses, in predicting to the Israelites, Deut. iv. 28., that, when in future times they should desert the worship of the one true God, they would be expelled from the promised land, and driven into exile among foreign nations, certainly did not intend to say that then they would worship strange gods; for he immediately adds, that in this, their afflicted condition, they would seek Jehovah their own God, and should find him, if indeed they would seek him with their whole heart. The word עבד, therefore, in that passage, is not applied to religious worship, nor in Deut. xxviii. 36 and 64., where we find the same prediction, but signifies to be subjected to the power of another, in which sense it is used in the same book, chap. xxviii. 48., concerning the Israelites being subjected to the power of their enemies. Thus then, in these predictions uttered generally in a more lofty strain of expression, the Israelites are described as then to be subjected to the power of those foreign gods with whom they were about to be so much delighted as that they would desert Jehovah their own God, and should there experience how vain, and altogether without power, these gods were, whom foreign nations feigned to be their tutelar deities .- But, to adduce another example of more extensive application-the spirit of God is often mentioned as the means by which men do things: the force of which expression, in the passages in which it occurs, must be determined from the context, and also from the nature of the things

themselves which are done. When God is said to have filled Bezaleel with his spirit to render him fit for executing the sacred tabernacle, Exod. xxxi. 2-11.; xxxv. 30-35., this is not to be understood of his power exerted on the mind of the man in an extraordinary manner, but, from the very nature of the thing, (compare also xxxvi. I.,) must be understood of those natural talents with which God had endowed him. But when the prophets say that they were inspired by the Divine Spirit, then certainly it is right that we should think that they speak of the extraordinary power and action of God exerted upon their minds, because they demonstrated this by the very subject of their writings, and sustained the divine legation with which they declared themselves entrusted in the most worthy manner. In this, however, there is nothing surprising; for the ancient Hebrews, accustomed to the greatest simplicity in speaking of all things, in all which they acknowledged the intervention of Divine Providence, whether they were of an ordinary or extraordinary nature, were of course wont to ascribe them to the Divine Spirit or Divine power, employing in both cases the same expressions.

Obs. 3. The proper consideration of the remote age of these writings, which we recommended in the last place, is also not a little useful to the interpreter. For as the ancient Hebrews applied the same expressions to the ordinary and extraordinary operations of the Deity, so also they employed the same phrases for expressing what God wished and effected, and what, from the wisest counsel, he permitted and suffered to be done. That phraseology, by which God is said to

have hardened and rendered obstinate the mind of Pharaoh, is well known: which certainly is not to be understood as if God was to be held as the author of this obstinacy, because not even in the most remote antiquity were opinions of this sort regarding the Supreme Deity prevalent among the Hebrews, and because this obstinacy is imputed to Pharaoh as a crime. Nothing else, therefore, is intended by this phraseology, but that God permitted for the wisest purpose that which he strongly condemned, and judged worthy of the severest punishment. David too, when he wished to signify that the abandoned Shimei was allowed by God to indulge his own wicked disposition, and that in this the merited divine judgment was executed on himself, describes this man as ordered by Jehovah to pronounce curses and heap injuries on him, 2 Sam. xvi. 11.-The due consideration of the remoteness of the times will also prevent us, when God is represented very much like man, from urging too strongly these anthropopathic expressions, and will induce us to explain them agreeably to the simplicity of these very ancient times. There is a particularly remarkable instance in Gen. xviii. 20, 21., where God is represented, after deliberating with himself, as having descended to inquire into the conduct of the inhabitants of Sodom, and to act with regard to them as they should deserve. By this description flowing naturally from the frequent apparition of God in a human form, this only was signified, and almost impressed upon the senses, that the calamity, about to fall on these wicked men, would be a punishment inflicted by the

most just judgment of God. For the opinion entertained by some that this description is to be ascribed to mean notions regarding the greatness of the Supreme Deity, is quite refuted by the intercession of Abraham made with God for the inhabitants of that country, Gen. xviii. 23—33., which, whatever ideas may be formed of the state of these remote ages, and of the familiar intercourse of God with men, must be allowed to breathe a spirit properly affected with, and altogether full of a sense of the supreme Divine Majesty.

# § 8.

Lastly, a proper use of the best interpreters, both ancient and modern, will not a little assist the understanding and explanation of the phraseology everywhere employed by the Hebrews.

Obs. 1. The more any one is endowed with those gifts of nature, and acquisitions of learning, by which a good interpreter of the Old Testament is distinguished, the more ought he diligently to search into the sense of any passage or more extended portion, which he is studying, before he consults others, however high their reputation may be. For it readily happens, that, if they propound clearly the reasons of their interpretation; satisfied with these, one does not inquire farther himself; whereas, if with the employment of all necessary aids, he applies himself

to the point, and only afterwards consults others, he may perhaps discover something preferable himself; undoubtedly, at least, after having studied the thing, he will be able to form a much better judgment of the opinions of others, and to perceive clearly what ought to be approved or disapproved in them. This is indeed a laborious method of proceeding, but is, at the same time, highly useful; and is indeed so much so, as abundantly to compensate the magnitude and difficulty of the labour, to an ingenuous mind.

Obs. 2. But, as it is not given to all to be able to pursue the mode of proceeding which we have just recommended, and, as even the most experienced interpreter occasionally either cannot extricate himself from some difficulty, or is prevented, from want of time, or some other cause, from not following the more tedious process; then, one has at hand the aid of interpreters, of whom he may make a wise and proper use. For this purpose, good sense will not dictate, that one should consult all the commentators and interpreters within his reach, but only those who are best. Neither will good sense dictate, that overlooking the more ancient, we should only apply to the more recent; but, on the contrary, should prefer those, of whatever age, who have employed all the best aids in their power, and have shewn the greatest care, in honestly searching into the sense of the sacred writers. Nor will it advise, but, on the contrary, powerfully dissuade from estimating authority, or any splendour of reputation, more highly than real excellence. In a word, it will only impel, and highly recommend to an interpreter, while he estimates those from whom he

seeks assistance, more by their excellence than their number, not to give himself up wholly to the guidance of any one, whom he follows blindly; but to take from each candidly and willingly, what is suitable to his purpose, and which the love of truth alone leads him to approve.

Obs. 3. To these general and brief observations, we shall now subjoin a few remarks regarding the use of the interpreters themselves, of every age.

The writers of the New Testament offer themselves to us in the first place; who, as we have already remarked, must be reckoned among the number of the interpreters of the Old Testament. P. i. S. i. C. iv. § 1. Obs. 2. For, if sometimes in the more recent writings of the Old Testament, some passages of the more ancient writings in that volume are explained, as we have seen to be the fact in the place just quoted, Obs. I.; of such it is not necessary now to treat particularly: although even these on occasion a good interpreter will by no means neglect, but will be able to turn to the best advantage.—With regard to the use of the writers of the New Testament in the interpretation of the Old Testament, it cannot, indeed, be denied that passages are frequently quoted in the New Testament, which are employed in a meaning different from that which the author intended; such, for instance, as that which we adduced in the former Section, § 2, Obs. 6. But, he who adopts the opinion that the same is manifestly the case with almost all the passages of the Old Testament quoted in the New Testament, and, consequently, that Christ, his Apostles, and the writers of the New Testament, are of no

authority in this respect; in our judgment such an one rashly detracts very much from the divine excellence of these persons. Therefore, not to say anything of the passages referring to the Messiah in the New Testament, of which we shall afterwards speak, it will be sufficient here generally to recommend to the interpreter, that, as often as he observes any passage from the Old Testament to be quoted in the New Testament, so as that a real interpretation seems to be given of it, he should, throwing aside all prejudice, sedulously inquire, whether by the sound rules of interpretation that passage can be properly interpreted in the manner in which it is explained in the New Testament; and we doubt not, but by ingenuously pursuing this method, he will be led clearly to perceive the meaning and force of some passages of the Old Testament, through the guidance of the Nev. Testa-We certainly believe that this will be the case, particularly with regard to the following, Genes. v. 24., with which compare Heb. xi. 5. Genes. xvii. 1. 7., compared with Heb. xi. 16. Genes, xxviii. 13., and Exod. iii. 6., compared with Math. xxii. 22-32.

Those who are commonly and properly denominated the ancient interpreters, though of inferior authority, have yet their use in interpretation. It is, indeed, quite certain that they are of the greatest value in criticism; but, no competent judge will assign to them the same weight, when applied to aiding the better understanding and exposition of words and phrases. They are of no little service, indeed, in confirming the most usual significations of single words, and, occasionally, for attaining a knowledge of their syntactical and etymological relations; which may ap-

pear from what we have already said, P. i. S. i. C. i. § 5, Obs. 4. With which compare C. iv. § 2, Obs. 12, at the beginning, and P. ii. S. ii. § 1, Obs. 3, n. 4. But, if the meaning of passages themselves be inquired into, they are very far from deserving the highest praise of excellence.

What estimation is due to Philo Judæus, Flavius Josephus, and the Tahmudic writers, when employed to aid interpretation, we have already stated, P. i. S. i. C. iv. § 1, Obs. 3; and we there saw that Josephus alone of these would be found useful in the department of interpretation. For, if we look to the rest of the native Hebrew writers, we shall not find that even those who seemed to deserve the highest reputation as interpreters, will be of much use to a candid expositor, although they ought not altogether to be neglected by a learned Christian interpreter.

Finally, the most ancient among the interpreters of all ages who have been followers of the Christian religion, the less they have pursued the allegorical method, and the more they have studied correctly to investigate the meaning of the words, deserve the more to be recommended to the study of those, who, in consequence of their office, or through inclination, apply themselves particularly to the study of the Old Testament. In general, not to waste words on the intermediate ages when little valuable was done relating to our present subject, those interpreters who have appeared since the restoration of learning are of greater utility, and, consequently, are those whom we have particularly had respect to, and already advised to be prudently consulted in Obs. 2.

#### PART SECOND.

#### SECTION THIRD.

OF THE UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLAINING OF THINGS.

§ 1.

While it is the duty of a good interpreter of the Old Testament, to endeavour rightly to understand and explain the words, phrases, and also the whole language of that volume, it is also his duty, through means of the best aids in his power, to endeavour to understand himself, and carefully to explain to others the things expressed by the words.

Obs. 1. Every one must readily perceive that the understanding and exposition of words, and the things expressed by words, are connected in the strictest manner. Nay, it ought to be the principal object of the interpreter who explains words, to pave the way which shall lead to the better understanding of things, although he himself may not be desirous of employing his labour peculiarly in illustrating the

things seen or related by the writer. The more, therefore, one endeavours rightly to explain things also, when it seems requisite and proper, the more will he be striving to fulfil all the duties of a good interpreter aright, and in a manner adapted to the condition of our times. For obscurity is found sometimes to exist more in the things than in the words; and, whilst the language is perspicuous, it is doubtful what the author means. The understanding of the subject too which is treated of, frequently assists very much the understanding of the words; as for example, when mention is made of laws, ceremonies, or institutions, or of the objects of natural history, or when figures are derived from them, or reference made to them: and that errors have been committed in the exposition of words, through ignorance of such things, is certainly not unexampled.

Cbs. 2. When we here speak of things expressed by language, we do not intend the things alone, and considered apart by themselves, but likewise their nature, genius, and object, when these conduce either to comprehending the meaning of the writer, or, are closely connected with the right understanding of the things themselves. Besides, in explaining either a discourse, or a poem, a diligent interpreter ought to enquire into the particular views of the things to be explained, which were present to the mind of the writer, and into their mutual connection. Farther, when at any time, either a shorter or longer train of reasoning occurs, a right study of things will induce the interpreter to investigate the nature of the grounds, and the grounds themselves, on which it

rests. And lastly, if any thing occurs which seems at variance with what is found in another place, the right study of things requires that he should be solicitous to determine what opinion ought to be formed regarding the apparent discrepancy, and in what manner the one passage may fairly be brought to agree with the other.

#### § 2.

In explaining, therefore, the historical parts of the Old Testament, the object ought to be, to form just notions of the events related: and wherever it can be done, their causes and intention ought to be inquired into.

- Obs. 1. What we here mean by the historical things of the Old Testament, are not only histories strictly so called, but likewise chronology and geography, the objects even of natural history, and also received rites and customs. For the explanation of each of these, we have already seen in P. i. S. iii. C. ii. how much certain aids are required. Let us now then see how, by means of these aids, they are to be explained.
- Obs. 2. We begin with the histories of the Old Testament, strictly so called. If any one wishes successfully to employ himself in explaining these, it behoves him, as far as possible, to carry himself wholly back to the very age described, accompanied by the

help and illuminated by the light of such aids as are to be had, and that he endeavour to understand, explain, and form a just opinion of the things transacted in each particular nation, in remote antiquity, from the genius and real motives of that antiquity, so very different from the nature of our times. we are desirous that this be particularly observed in explaining the Hebrew histories, we likewise wish that the peculiar design of God in separating the Israelitish race from other nations, which was the preservation of true religion, be diligently attended to. For to him who either overlooks this design, or denies it, the whole history of the Israelites will be full of obscurity, and difficult to be understood; out of which darkness and difficulties he will not be able to extricate himself by resorting to the fiction of God being brought in continually ex machina. On the other hand, he who rightly attends to this design, provided he be possessed of a sufficient share of learning and liberality, when he attempts the exposition of the events, will be able to place the most singular of them in the best light, and will himself perceive, often with the most delightful feeling of true pleasure, and usefully explain to others their nature, causes, and most wise intention.

But, beside the prudent contemplation of this divine intention just mentioned, which may be admirably employed for illustrating the whole history of the Israelites, it is highly pleasing and useful to the interpreter to direct his attention, in such a manner, to those things which deserve praise or blame, and also to the actions of men, particularly of those who

acted a principal part in the history of the Israelites; as that he may properly explain with what object, and induced by what reasons, they acted as they did, and not otherwise. It is, however, scarcely necessary to observe, in this case, that the genius of the times, of the nation, and of the individuals themselves, must constantly be attended to .- There is no one, for instance, who does not confess that the immoveable generosity of David towards Saul, his most bitter enemy, deserves to be praised: and no one, who is in any respect acquainted with the disposition of the man, will readily be inclined to ascribe it to any degree of weakness. What, however, impelled him to this so uncommon generosity, will be easily perceived by an attentive interpreter. For David himself has sufficiently clearly signified, that he was penetrated by veneration for the man anointed by the divine command to the royal dignity, and who occupied the place of Jehovah in the theocratic government of the nation, 1 Sam. xxiv. 7, 8. This noble motive then, of his religion, which he professed from the bottom of his heart, and by the deepest rooted feeling of which he was actuated, had so great a power over his mind, that he restrained even his fierce companions from the murder of the unguarded king, which they might easily have accomplished, and chose rather to expose himself in future to the various inconveniences and dangers of a precarious life, than himself to perpetrate, or to permit others to do, that which he deemed unlawful; from all which, an interpreter will be able so to explain the whole of David's conduct in this matter, as that it may be understood

how admirable it was through the whole of the time of his wretched wanderings, and that too in an Oriental man of the most lively feelings, and otherwise not devoid of the desire of revenge.—But the same David has fallen under the reprehension of numbers, on account of his pretended madness with Achish, king of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxi. 11-15., which certainly is by no means deserving of praise, no more than the feigned madness of Ulysses, wishing to escape from military service, regarding which consult Cicero, Off: iii. 26, or that of Solon desirous of providing for the safety of his own life, and for that of the state, Off. i. 30, or that of L. Junius Brutus, anxious for an opportunity of delivering the Republic from the tyranny of Tarquinius Superbus, of which Dionys. Halicarnassus has given an account, Antiq. Rom. L. iv., deserves to be celebrated under the name of prudence; it becomes us, however, to excuse that dishonourable dissimulation in the exiled David, when reduced to the greatest straits, and to judge of it, as of other like pieces of conduct, not arising from any bad intention, from the nature of the men and the times; which mode of proceeding, the more correctly it is followed out by the interpreter, the more will it be productive of usefulness.

Obs. 3. We proceed to chronology. There is no one who is ignorant that this study, as far as it is occasionally conjoined with the interpretation of the Old Testament, and relates to the events described in it, which are to be explained by the interpreter, is attended with very great difficulty. Nor, indeed, from its very nature, can it be easy. For in such high antiquity, who can believe that all events could have

been arranged and reduced to an accurate order of time? Should one then meet with chronological difficulties of that nature, from which, even after the prudent employment of the best aids, he knows not how to extricate himself: let him not wonder that a just and accurate order in the history, which shall be satisfactory in all points, has not been possible to be made out from books so ancient, written too for the sake of religion, and not of chronology. But, should he happen to be so successful, as in any probable manner to overcome one or more of the greater chronological difficulties which have heretofore seemed insuperable, let him rejoice in the fruit of his unpleasant labour, which may redound to the honour of the sacred volume.—There is a difficulty, however, deserving to be here briefly noticed, which arises from the chronology of some other of the ancient nations extending itself to a much more remote date than the sacred chronology, but which is not of so serious a nature as some have imagined. It appears then, that not a few nations of ancient times, particularly the Egyptians, sought to acquire a great name, by pretending to a very great and improbable degree of antiquity.—But, as this may be esteemed to belong more to the study of chronology than to the exposition of things which we are presently discussing, we shall only subjoin one brief observation, which is elosely connected with the interpretation itself, and is of no little importance; regarding the manner, we mean, in which we are to understand years in the first part of Genesis. Some late writers, offended with the longevity of the first men, say, that originally the

year consisted only of one month, or at most of three; that afterwards it was lengthened out to six months, and only at a late period, about the age of the patriarch Joseph, came to consist of twelve months. Ingenious enough this, truly! but is indeed an assumption without the smallest probability; for, omitting other things, according to this opinion, there would have been persons among those who are mentioned in Genesis v. and xi., who begot children before the eighth or tenth year of their life. But it is neither necessary nor proper, by assuming rash conjectural fictions, to diminish the longevity of the first men to the ordinary brevity of human life at the present day. For it was very much accommodated to the primeval state of human affairs, to various purposes among men, placed as it were in a state of childhood, and to the divine intention in creating them: which every intelligent and candid interpreter will be able to make manifest to the advantage of those whose minds are free from prejudice.

Obs. 4. With regard to geography: it will not unfrequently be useful to an interpreter, solicitous about the proper explanation of things, that he form to himself correct ideas of the place where any action is described to have taken place, and apply these to the advantage of others. An example of this may be taken from the relation of the celebrated passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites, when they went out of Egypt, Exod. xiv. 21, 22., which has light east upon it from the fact, that the passage, as may be collected from observations made upon the spot, happened at a narrow part of that sea, or Arabic gulf, where the depth

was not great, while the bottom on each side being lower, retained the water, affording to the Israelites the advantage of a degree of protection on each side.

—There is another remarkable instance in the history of David, when flying from Saul, which we have in I Sam. xxiv., when David, with his companions hid in the deepest recess of a cave, observed Saul taking his mid-day sleep in the entrance of it. There are in the mountainous country of Palestine, caverns very large and spacious, observed by modern travellers, which have more than one entrance to them. Of such a cavern then, he who shall have formed to himself a clear notion, will more clearly understand how Saul might not even have suspected that David was in it to observe him.

But, as the knowledge of the peculiarities of the nature of the soil and of the climate of the Israelitish country, also belongs to the study of ancient geography, it is proper that an interpreter cull from this knowledge whatever may tend to the better understanding of things. There is, to adduce only one instance, no difficulty in the language of the historical relation in 1 Sam. xii. 17, but the thing will not be properly understood, unless it be known that there is neither thunder nor rain in the time of the wheat harvest in Palestine: when, therefore, these took place in consequence of the prayers of Samuel, verses 18, 19, we see from this that the Israelites were much astonished because of the uncommon nature of the thing.

Obs. 5. Let us now attend to the exposition of natural things, on which point it will suffice for our pur-

pose to adduce two examples: the one from natural history, strictly so called, the other from diseases, which we have already referred to that sort of history taken in the widest signification, P. i. S. iii. C. ii. § 4, Obs. 1.—Two very strong and fierce animals, the hippopotamus and crocodile, mentioned and described in Job xl. and xli., shall serve as the first: of which animals, certainly the more accurate the notion any one has been able to form, the more clearly will be understand their poetic description. But should one, in addition, be able to explain and make clear, for what reason, in a magnificent address ascribed to God, they are presented to the consideration of Job; and, if he should also shew that these were the most terrible and frightful animals in the country of Egypt well known to Job, and therefore exhibited an apt image of proud and fierce men, whose life and prosperity seemed to Job to be at variance with the divine justice: then certainly will he have explained the meaning and force of this admirable passage.—The second example is more clear, and respects that most direful of all diseases, the disease of leprosy. A perfect acquaintance with the nature, severity, great contagiousness and difficult cure of this disease, will then be highly useful both for the better understanding what things are directed concerning it in the laws of Moses, and also for the more proper explanation of many places in the book of Job, who was afflicted with a very severe species of this disease. And when one is employed in the interpretation of passages, where images derived from this disease are applied to describe the vileness of iniquity, such as those in

the xxxviii. and li. Psalms, it must be useful for the explication of these, to have given just notions, as far as necessary, of this disease: and it is also proper to observe, that in the purification from this disease, prescribed by God in Levit. xiv., respect was had to the vileness of the sins of men, and to taking away their guilt and punishment. See p. 198.

Obs. 6. Lastly, we shall make some brief observations on the exposition of received customs and rites, which we have also comprehended under the general idea of what belongs to history. As then, in the case of other nations, these are best explained from the genius of those nations, and from the general state of antiquity, so also the interpreter of the sacred books will employ both these methods whenever he finds it proper and suitable to his purpose. Thus, for example, when we read in Gen. xliii. 32., that it was not customary for the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews: this may be partly illustrated from the genius of antiquity, through which the people of each nation looked down contemptuously upon others as barbarians; but chiefly, from the peculiar genius of the Egyptian nation, which held in abhorrence eating with any other nation whatever, looking on them as polluted. Compare Herodotus, ii. 41, and 91., at the beginning. -With regard to what relates to the received customs and rites of the ancient Hebrews, which may require to be explained by the interpreter; the more these appear to be singular, and to recede farther from ours, the more useful will it be in itself, and occasionally the better suited to vindicate the honour of the sacred volume, if their causes are investigated

as originating partly from the genius of the nation, partly from the general circumstances of ancient nations, particularly the Oriental, but partly likewise from a certain state as it were of childhood particularly in which the Hebrews long continued.—The genius of this nation, therefore, was, that they were much moved by things affecting their senses; and such was the state of feeling common to almost the whole of the ancient nations, but particularly those of the East: but the Hebrews shewed themselves more under this impulse, from their remaining longer in the primitive state of mankind allied to children in their manners. From these three causes, intimately connected with each other, a prudent interpreter of things will explain some particulars which appear singular, and also symbolical actions, by which things remote from the senses might in some measure be subjected to them; and of which the use so much prevailed, that even men of the highest authority conformed themselves to it by the divine admonition. See Jer. xxvii. 1-11., xxviii. 10-14. Nay, even from this cause which we have indicated, may probably be explained why the Hebrews shewed themselves violently addieted, before the Babylonish captivity, to pay impious homage to the gods of foreign nations, whom they could see with their eyes, and why the same people, whom no threatenings of remote evils, and of the destruction of their country and supervening exile, could reeal from that propensity, at last, when struck with a sense of these calamities pressing upon them, showed themselves so affected as to become almost quite changed in their dispositions and manners.

# § 3.

In the exposition of the laws prescribed by Moses, under the divine direction, it is absolutely necessary to attend to their intention and occasion: in the exposition again of the opinions and doctrines, whether they regard religion or things connected with it, respect must always be had to the age to which they belong.

- Obs. 1. As it is necessary to reckon among the things to be attended to by an interpreter, both the laws and statutes of which mention is made in the books of the Old Testament, and likewise the opinions and doctrines, either more fully or briefly recounted or indicated: very ample, nay, infinite materials, offer themselves to us, if we were to pass the whole of those things in review which belong to each of these heads, and to give an account of the manner in which an interpreter ought to treat each of these particulars separately. Therefore, we shall choose out, and briefly touch on those instances which occur under each of these heads most frequently, or which may be attended with the greatest utility.
- Obs. 2. The Mosaic laws then, being enacted by divine authority, have been so diffused, as it were, through by far the greatest part of the sacred volume, and often so interwoven in various ways with the histories, transactions, and the very subject even of

these writings, whether in prose or poetry, that the understanding of them holds by no means the lowest place among the duties of the interpreter, in order that he may derive from this knowledge, when necessary, what may be suitable to the present age, which is not satisfied with mere industry bestowed on investigating the meaning of words. For one while it will be required of him to illustrate the whole nature of the splendid sacred ritual, from the divine intentions in distinguishing the Israelitish nation, and in training them to the best religion of which they were capable: at another time it will be of no little consequence to demonstrate the divine wisdom, which, accommodating itself to the genius of men exceedingly captivated with external appearance, subjected to their senses things of high importance, which were not recognizable by the senses, and inspired into as many as were of more exalted minds, by the very constitution of the sacred rites, true religious feelings and affections, and conjoined and coupled the liberty and prosperity of the whole nation by a natural and indissoluble bond, with the observation of the prescribed worship.—As to the Mosaic civil laws again, a fit occasion frequently offers itself to the interpreter, when he can shew either the highly useful connection of these with religion, or when he may carefully remark their admirable efficacy in promoting the safety, humanity, and general virtue of the people, or finally, when he may investigate the sources and occasions of these laws, and thus derive them partly from the natural principles of justice and equity, partly from the institutions of their ancestors, to which

the Hebrews were pertinaciously attached, partly from the very celebrated jurisprudence of the Egyptians applied by Moses to his own purposes, and partly also from the state and circumstances of the nation itself, to which they were admirably adapted by divine wisdom.—It is indeed sufficient for the object of our work, to have slightly touched on the principal of these kinds of observations, which, if the interpreter bring forward on all proper occasions, he will in no mean degree be useful in this age which is disposed to inquire curiously into the causes, nature, and object of things.

Obs. 3. It will also be of signal utility in this age, in expounding the opinions and doctrines either relating to religion, or things connected with religion, which occur in the Old Testament, to have a proper regard to that age to which they belong. For, as it was formerly the custom of most Christians to ascribe too much to those ancient times which were blessed with divine instruction, so now it is customary with numbers to form too mean a judgment of those ages. The duty, therefore, is now imposed on a candid interpreter of things, that he rightly distinguish the notions of the vulgar from those of the more intelligent concerning religion and other most important doctrines, and that he likewise study to separate prudently those doctrines which owe their origin to divine instruction from those which men formed for themselves, or embellished in a poetical manner; and finally, that he attend to the diversity of times, which is chiefly deserving of his attention.-The interpreter, therefore, will candidly observe, that it is manifest,

from certain indications, that it was a superstitious opinion held by the common people of the Hebrews, conformable to the universal sense of antiquity, that there were more gods than one, and that each nation had its own gods; but he will also remark that Moses, David, Isaiah, and other superior men, were free from this superstition, although, on more occasions than one, they seem to have accommodated themselves to the vulgar opinion, in order the more successfully to oppose it .- The interpreter will not deny that the sad and mournful region of the dead, which represented the life after death as only a thin flitting shade, thus furnishing ample materials to the luxuriant imagination of the poets, was a mere fiction of human genius, and will confess this to be the fact when he meets with any mention of this popular fable: but, at the same time, he will not attempt to explain away, nor will be neglect to perceive, the sufficiently clear traces of a better life, to which the good men among them hoped to be recalled after death. But, in expounding these and other opinions and doctrines, he ought, as it were, to forget his own times, and transfer himself wholly into that age about which he is employed. And the more carefully he does this, the more rightly and truly will be judge of the notions of the ancient Hebrews relating to religion, and the more easily will be perceive, and the more clearly explain to others, the divine wisdom which, in teaching mankind, adapted itself to their capacity, and instructed them only in those things which they could bear, and which were quite accommodated to their circumstances. -For, although from the most remote antiquity, and

even from the very origin of the human race, the notions which occur in the Old Testament, and are due to divine instruction regarding the supreme God, are so admirable, that among all other ancient nations nothing comparable is to be found: still something adheres to them, connected with the nature of the times and the genius of the men, and the more ancient they are, the more is perceived in them borrowed from the nature of man and his modes of acting, and suited as it were to the instruction of children. Those opinions again, which the Israelites received successively from Moses and the prophets, are altogether adapted to the disposition of the nation, affected only by what struck their senses, and at the same time exceedingly conceited and quite obstinate: and as also, God is nowhere in express terms declared to be a pure spirit, but this nature of his, which exceeded the conception of the men of ancient times, is presented to their understandings in a popular manner as much as possible, as it was not allowed to represent him by any corporeal similitude, nor was there any appearance in the adytum of the sanctuary, so also, such attributes of God are chiefly brought into view as are most powerful in exciting the highest reverence for him, and for inspiring the greatest awe .- Besides, although in the very general expectation among mankind of some sort of a future life. it would be quite improper to deny some ideas of it to the ancient Hebrews, who were blessed with a divine revelation, it would be quite improper, on the other hand, to expect from them those correct notions on this subject which the more perfect revelation of Christ has

opened up; we must, therefore, only suppose them to have entertained such opinions on this point as might be expected from the minds of these ancient men who required the motives of immediate rewards and punishments, and who were capable of forming a conception of receiving life anew at some future period, much more than of the immortality of souls ; because, in short, they were not yet ripe for the expectation of a full retribution of all their actions from the Supreme Judge after death: for entertaining which expectation, the human mind can only become fitted in the slow progress of ages .- These remarks may serve as a specimen, in this most extensive subject, to shew what we think is required of an interpreter, as often as an opportunity occurs to him for expounding things relating to religion.

## \$ 4.

In interpreting any composition, whether in prose or poetry, it is often extremely useful to inquire into the thoughts which were in the mind of the author and into their connection: and when a train of reasoning occurs, to resolve it into its first principles and elements.

Obs. 1. It is certainly highly conducible to the attainment of a proper understanding of any composition, either in prose or peetry, that one has arrived at a full

understanding both of the particular expressions, and of the things signified by the words, and also taken apart by themselves: but something farther often de. serves to be recommended, namely, that an interpreter carefully investigate what the author himself particularly had in view. For which purpose, it is not a little advantageous that the occasion of the composition, whether in prose or poetry, be ascertained, and the disposition, age, and circumstances of the anthor be investigated. In most of those writings which contain historical narrations, this appears at a glance; in many poems, through the aid of history, it is not very difficult to discover; in not a few, however, which relate to a particular, and not altogether ascertained event, it is sometimes so difficult that ample room is left for conjecture. We shall not bring forward examples of each of those cases to which we have alluded, which, in what must be sufficiently clear to every one, does not seem to be required, but shall content ourselves with one from that most noble hymn the xc. Psalm, whose author is indicated by the inscription, and the occasion of it appears from the subject; compare Num. xiv. 26, &c. In the explication of this hymn, the interpreter will best succeed who has penetrated most deeply into the genius of the poet, and transferred himself as it were into his circumstances. He should then represent to himself Moses, a man of an exalted mind and understanding, advanced in life, the deliverer of the Israelites oppressed by Egyptian bondage, and likewise their lawgiver and leader, a person too, full of a sense of the divine majesty, and altogether intent upon the welfare of his

countrymen, the greater part of whom he had seen, after he had successfully brought them out of Egypt, at the end of a long wandering through the deserts of Arabia, carried off by an untimely death, the merited punishment of their perversity; all the survivors of whom he intends to represent in this poem as expressing themselves in the way in which they ought to have been affected in their circumstances. If then the interpreter substitutes himself as it were, wholly in the situation of Moses at the time when he composed this hymn, and endeavours to think and feel as he did, the following will appear to him to be nearly the plan of the whole poem. Moses commences with adoring Jehovah as the best and only refuge in the most afflicted circumstances; such as he had, indeed, ever been in all past ages, and would continue to be in all time to come. Reflecting, at the same time, on the eternal and immutable duration of the Supreme God, to which, in a mournful strain, he opposes the shortness and pitiable weakness of human life, the poet describes this external duration as far anterior to, and to last greatly longer than the mountains themselves, those ancient children, as it were of the earth, which presented themselves to his view, whilst, again, the grass now green, but suddenly withering before evening by a burning and desolating blast, offered to him a sad image of the miserable and transitory life of man. He then bewails the unhappy state of this life, and deplores the almost intolerable, though just severity of the divine wrath. But, that the Israelites might be the better instructed to become wise through a deep sense of this wrath, he

pours out wishes from the bottom of his heart, and at the same time intreats with earnest prayer, full of hope, that God would pity the Israelites, and benignantly grant to them more prosperous fortune to compensate for the length of evils which they had suffered, and that he would quickly direct the immediate, successful, and altogether happy occupation of the promised land.

Obs. 2. What we have said regarding the investigation of the thoughts, in the mind of the author of any composition, in prose or in verse, is of most use when a train of reasoning occurs, which, in order to be rightly understood, must be resolved as it were into its first principles and elements, by an interpreter who attends to things. This, indeed, is frequently not an arduous task; sometimes, however, it is in the highest degree difficult, when thick clouds of obscurity are induced by the writers differing from us in their thoughts, and circumstances of climate, genius, and times, for dispelling which, as far as the nature of the things will permit, much labour, penetration, and patience must be required even from the most skilful interpreter. This observation particularly applies to the reasonings contained in the speeches in the poem of Job, and in the Book of Ecclesiastes; the force, nature, and object of which, and consequently the very principles on which they depend, how difficult it is to explain, is sufficiently evident from the remarkable differences alone of the interpretations given. Therefore we advise the interpreter, who can see with his own eyes, and, aided by the light of his own judgment and . learning, applies himself to these more obscure reason-

ings, that, laying aside his own modes of thinking and those of his age, he study to assume as it were the person of those ancient Oriental men, who are introduced as speaking, and to investigate, and candidly and sedulonsly to weigh their arguments, as derived from their times and the notions then entertained. By this mode of proceeding he will sometimes have the satisfaction of discovering the truth, which had escaped other interpreters: and certainly will merit the praise of an interpreter suited to the wants of our times .- But, in producing examples of reasoning, two shall suffice, one taken from history, the other poetical. argument of the cunning woman which occurs in 2 Sam. xiv. excellently contrived for inducing and persuading David to recal Absalom from exile, has in it something difficult and obscure; in disentangling and illustrating which, the interpreter may exercise himself. The thing, above all others to be attended to in this matter is, that Absalom having slain his brother Ammon, was desirous of avoiding the merited anger of his father, and therefore had left the country; and that David, on the other hand, from his great indulgence towards his children, felt no small degree of propensity towards his exiled son. The woman then, suborned by Joab, who was in the interest of Absalom, brought to the tribunal of David a feigned story, but wearing greatly the appearance of truth, regarding her only surviving son, whose death was demanded by his whole family, because he had killed his brother in a fierce quarrel, vs. 6, 7. She therefore, when the king, prone to benevolence in giving judgment, had promised that he would inquire into the matter, and

give such directions as would remove the fears of this afflicted woman, knowing that, according to the divine law, the person who killed another designedly must be given up to death, and wishing to obtain something more determinate from the king, said, that she desired that if there seemed to be any thing unjust in granting mercy to one who had slain his brother, that the whole of the injustice might fall upon her and upon her family, vs. 8, 9. Still, not content with the absolute promise of the protection of the king, she so moved David by her supplications, that he confirmed his promise with a solemn oath, verses 10, 11. After she saw that she had obtained her object, without any circumlocution, she told the king that he had pronounced sentence in his own cause, which it was unlawful to retract; and prudently tempering, and appositely softening her audacity, by the melancholy image of water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, well adapted for powerfully affecting the mind of a most affectionate father, she insinuated that his son might die in exile, and never be restored to the wishes of his father; and, that she might take away every impediment which might restrain David, whose mind was deeply affected by a sense of religion, she declared that she had reason to hope, that God himself, confirming the milder sentence of the king appointed by himself, would forgive Absalom's crime, and would not reject him who had been an exile, and judged worthy of death, nor take him from the number of the living, verses 12-14.-We here take the word aum, verses 14 and 13, in the signification of

decreeing, judging, and translate this part of the passage thus: Nor shall God take away his life, but shall pass this sentence, that he will not reject him who has now been driven into exile.—Finally, the woman, to excuse herself in some degree for having addressed the king in this covert manner, indicated her fear, that if she had not pursued this method, she would not have attained her object; and, at the same time said, that she was persuaded that the king, if he should concede mercy in a feigned case, and should thus perceive that he had been unawares compelled to concede mercy to Absalom, would by this means be enabled to bring the anxiety of his mind to rest about his son: and that he would perceive this, she was satisfied, from his admirable and superhuman wisdom, verses 15-17.

We shall now subjoin to this example, taken from history, which, although somewhat long, seemed particularly suited to our undertaking, a second of a poetical character, but shorter and less difficult. the first Psalm, the time of the composition of which, its occasion, or who is to be reckoned the author of it, in no manner affects its subject generally-in the 1st and 2d verses of this Psalm, then, the happiness of the righteous above the impious is celebrated. the former, a tree planted by the river of water, ever green, and producing its fruit in its season, affords a most delightful image to an Oriental man, while the worthless, unstable, and transitory prosperity of the impious, brought to his mind the chaff scattered by the wind from the uncovered threshing floors, verses 3, 4. To this description, which must be examined

by the rules of Oriental poetry, is next subjoined an argument, likewise dressed up in the poetical and Oriental manner, which is peculiarly adapted for persuading the Hebrews of a remote age, verses 5 and 6, the amount of which is, "The state of the righteous and of the wicked cannot possibly be the same, because God, the constant observer and most just judge of men, approves the righteous and condemns the wicked." For על כן does not there signify, on this account, therefore, but because that, since; neither is the last future judgment after death alluded to, but that moral government of God which is continually executing against individuals. God, the very present judge of all men, is represented as erecting his tribunal, before which he calls the righteous and the wicked, to each of whom he renders according to his works, so that the wicked cannot stand among the righteous, but are condemned, and shall not be absolved from the punishment they have deserved. A similar figure occurs on other occasions—and in Ps. vii. 7, 8; ix. 4, 5; l. and exxx. 3.

## § 5.

Lastly, As a mutual and harmonious settlement of those passages, which, in the Old Testament, seem to be in opposition, belongs to the interpretation of things, it is the duty of a proper interpreter to give his anxious attention to this point in all necessary cases.

Obs. 1. It is impossible but that, in books of the greatest antiquity, written by different authors, and at different times, under a foreign climate, and in a language long since dead, some things should occasionally occur which seem to be not altogether in harmony, nay even to be at variance with each other. For, indeed, if through the most complete agreement in things having a reference to the principal object of these books, all of them so conspired, that in the most minute circumstances there was not the least appearance of discrepancy, a just suspicion of an intended agreement would arise, which would either fall on the writers themselves, or upon the Jews, as having dared to abolish every sort of opposition or discord among them: and, consequently, our confidence in the integrity of those books, which we so justly attribute to them, and their authority in things pertaining to religion, would be greatly shaken.

Obs. 2. When any disagreement in things occurs, the first object of inquiry is, from what persons it proceeds, and whether it be of such a nature as the interpreter should labour to reconcile. For as no one will see any cause of offence in the bitter and opposing arguments between Job and his three friends, on things of the utmost importance, there is therefore no necessity, when any one of these, who is introduced as speaking, seems to err from the truth, for the interpreter to suppose that this error is only apparent, and therefore, that this appearance of error ought by all means to be removed.—Because in 1 Sam. iv. 8., the Philistines say that the Egyptians were grievously afflicted with plagues in the deserts

of Arabia, by the tutelary Deity of the Israelites, there is no reason why we should attempt to reconcile this with the true history, since it was very easy for the Philistines to fall into error in this thing, which they had only heard by report, and from an ancient and confused tradition. In like manner, the Abimelech who, in 2 Sam. xi. 21., is called by Joab the son of Jerubbesheth, is named in the history to which he refers, Judg. ix. 1, 53., the son of Jerubbaal: this trifling difference may be explained from the different names which the same man bore, or be attributed to an error in writing the name: but why may we not even suppose that the memory of Joab, a military man, failed him in referring to the name of a man in ancient history? Some of the ancient interpreters have corrected this error: but the author himself did not think proper to correct either this or the former mistake, as he chose to represent men not speaking as they ought to have done, but as they really did.—Another discrepancy, which may be thought of more importance, and which is certainly of a different nature, of which we shall take notice here, is that Nathan, a divine prophet, immediately approved of the proposition of David, when wishing to build a temple to Jehovah, as what would be most acceptable to him, but soon after, as if at variance with what he had formerly said, dissuades him from it as contrary to the will of Jehovah, 2 Sam. vii. 1-13. But, indeed, what he said at first was merely from his own judgment, and in his own name, but, when divinely admonished, he changed his opinion, and, as became a divine ambassador, he advised in

that capacity what was at variance with that which he had said in his own person.

Obs. 3. Neither, in general, is it any difficulty, when the same writer, according to the different state of his affections, or the different manner in which he views a subject, expresses opposite feelings, or opposite thoughts. Not a few such instances are found in the Psalius of David, and in the speeches of Job, where every one must acknowledge the feelings to have been so powerfully affected, as to afford a sufficient reason why these persons should not always have been quite consistent, and should even seem to contradict themselves .- But, passing over these, we shall adduce an instance easy to be understood, which may perhaps open the way to understanding some more difficult cases. In the admirable lxxiii. Psalm, the philosophic poet Asaph has exhibited the perverted sentiments which arose in his mind, from observing the prosperity of the wicked, and the more correct sentiments which succeeded them, when he had fully pondered their unstable and uncertain state—nearly in the same manner as Claudian, in the celebrated passage of his poem, entitled Rufinus, Lib. i. v. 1-23., represents himself on a similar occasion, as having doubted of a divine providence superintending human affairs, until these impious feelings of his mind were done away by the punishment of Rufinus. Now then, from this clear example, the more obscure book of Ecclesiastes may be illustrated, which has seemed to the interpreters of all ages to contain many arguments repugnant to each other, for no other reason, but that the author

brings forward the various reflexions not unfrequently at variance with each other, which he had entertained according to the various points of view in which he had considered the cares and pursuits of men.—There is a remarkable example in Prov. xxvi. 4, 5., of a designed opposition in sentiment, but which is full of wise acuteness of observation, where we have two opposite admonitions: the first of which is, Answer not a fool according to his folly, and the second, answer a fool according to his folly. In the first of these, the answer is understood to be such, as will shew the person answering, to be like to the fool: in the second, the answer is understood to be such as is suited to repress the folly of the fool.

Obs. 4. A greater difficulty at times occurs, when, in the divine doctrines and laws, something appears so dissimilar, that, at first glance, no slight repugnancy seems to exist. We do not here refer to that greater fulness and perfection, observable in the progress of time, of the notions delivered and represented of the Supreme Deity, a thing quite consistent with the gradual advancing cultivation of the human mind. They are things of a different nature pertaining to divine matters, and having an appearance of repugnancy, which we here intend .- Of this sort, of which we shall only select a few examples, one instance is, when God is described in the same historical relation to be moved, and not to be moved, to repentance, 1 Sam. xv. 11, 29, and 35. The former of these, which frequently occurs, represents God as affected after the manner of man, when any one does not answer his purpose, and is rejected by him as unworthy of his kindness;

the latter of these instances denies that God is really like to changeable man, who changes his opinion, and repents of his intentions.—To the same class we also refer God's saying, Exod. vi. 2, 3., that he was not known by the name of Jehovah to the Patriarchs, though, at the same time, when addressing Abraham, Gen. xv. 7., he gives himself this appellation: but, we ought to understand this declaration as applicable merely to what was implied in the name, which the posterity of the Patriarchs only at last came to understand, when they worshipped him under that appellation as the tutelary God of their nation, by which he was clearly distinguished from the gods of other nations, who were distinguished each by their own name.-Farther, it is remarkable, that the value of the external worship prescribed by Moses by divine command, and sanctioned by the severest punishments, was afterwards so disparaged, and even abolished as disagreeable to God, nay as quite displeasing to him, by men divinely inspired; as for example by Samuel, I Sam. xv. 22., by Asaph, Ps. l., and by Isaiah, chap. i. But, in these instances, what is taught is, that external service is of no value in the sight of God, unless a mind, full of reverence for him and addicted to that piety and virtue recommended by him, be added .- Again, Moses does not seem consistent with himself as a divine legislator, when, in Levit. xvii. 3, 4., he forbids them to kill any animal, allowed to be eaten, at home, while he permits them to do this in Deut. xii. 15 and 20. But, the former precept manifestly refers to the time when the Israelites were in the descrts of Arabia, and when they had

little flesh meat, and the latter when they were to dwell in the promised land .- The opposition, which we shall notice in the last place, appears much greater between the penal sanction annexed to the first and second law of the Decalogue, where God openly declares, that he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth generation, and between the no less clear declaration of the divine will which is found in Deuter, xxiv. 16., that the parents are not to be punished for the children, nor the children for the parents. But individuals only are had respect to in this latter law, as appears by comparing in particular Deut. xvii. 2-7., while in the penalty attached to the two former laws, regard is had not to individual Israelites, much less to individuals of any other nation, but to the whole Israelitish people, who, if they should be guilty of defection from the worship of the true God, were to suffer the punishment of this defection even to the third and fourth generation, (compare Deut. iv. 25-27, and vii. 9-11,) which, accordingly happened to them in the destruction of their state, and subsequent exile.

Obs. 5. Such discrepancy as occasionally appears in the description of things, for the most part readily disappears when we attain to a right understanding of the words and phrases. Thus, when in 2. Sam. xxiv. 1., God is said to have instigated David to take a census of the whole people, for the purpose of forming a standing army, if we consult the context, we

<sup>&</sup>amp; In the original, "ut totum populum ad militiam conscriberet perpetuam."

shall see that this means, that God permitted that David should be instigated: neither is the word לאמר there to be referred to God, but ought to be translated, when it was said to David. Observing this, there will not exist the smallest appearance of opposition between this passage and that in I Chron. xxi. 1., where this instigation is attributed to Satan, or rather to some enemy or evil counsellor .- It has also been foolishly thought, that there is an opposition between what is said in Job xxxviii. 7,, that the morning stars sung for joy when God laid the foundations of the earth, and the history in Genesis i., of the creation of the stars after the creation of the earth. But when, in Genesis i. 1., the heavens and the earth are said to have been created, the stars are afterwards represented to have been adapted to the uses of the earth: while again, in the passage of the book of Job, the heavenly inhabitants are described as rejoicing, on the first morning of the earth, over it just created. For as the visible heavens are understood to consist of the sun, moon, and stars, and the heavens are poetically used in Job xv. 15., for the inhabitants of heaven, these last are those who are there intended, or the same beings who are called the sons of God in the parallelism of the sentences.

Obs. 6. The examples of historical discrepancy, which are also brought from the Old Testament, are, for the most part, referable to an imperfect mode of relating history, which often attends not particularly either to the order of time, or of nice arrangement; in clearing up these difficulties, however, the

exercise of an unprejudiced judgment, illuminated by the light of true learning, is of much value. These discrepancies are partly also to be referred to the proper names of persons, which are not always written in the same way, and frequently one man has more names than one; and partly they regard numbers, which are sometimes written full and complete, and at other times reduced to some greater general computation, in stating which, no one need wonder that errors have occasionally been committed.

Obs. 7. If all these things be as we have stated them, and as we firmly believe them to be, it follows, that an interpreter of the Old Testament must sedulously endeavour, when any appearance of discrepancy occurs, to ascertain whether it be of such a nature as to need explanation, and how it is best reconcilable. There are, indeed, persons in our times who confidently affirm that real discrepancies do occasionally occur in the books of the Old Testament, which are to be ascribed to the authors themselves. But when, in the profane writers of antiquity of the best character and reputation, some things occur related by them, which either seem to be in opposition to each other, or to others certainly known from other sources; whether is it becoming boldly and arrogantly to pronounce that an error exists, when perhaps you are only betraying your own precipitancy or shameful ignorance, and through a little more care bestowed on endeavouring to understand the words and things, you might easily remove the apparent inconsistency? Nay, even although this

occasionally may not be possible, is it not more becoming to derive the cause of this from the number of ages which have elapsed, from the great diversity between our language and people and theirs, from the loss of records, and our ignorance of many things; in fine, from the unskilfulness, negligence, or rashness of transcribers? What then equity requires to be done with regard to the best writers of antiquity, is much more demanded in respect to these most ancient of all writings, which are also of singular excellence, and of divine origin; and, as not a few things, which formerly seemed to be most discordant, have since been brought to accordance by the attempts of unprejudiced interpreters, we ought certainly not to despair of many others, as yet obscure from their apparent inconsistency, being in time satisfactorily illustrated: although there are certainly many passages corrupted by the fault of transcribers, which cannot be remedied by the best interpreter, on which, therefore, the power of critical emendation must be tried-of which we shall treat in the following section.



